

Ancient Empires before Alexander

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Ancient Empires before Alexander

Scope:

For 23 centuries, the figure of Alexander the Great has fired the imaginations of all who hear his story: The heroic young king led his army thousands of miles across the Near East and never lost a battle, conquering the largest empire the world had ever known, only to die a month short of his 33rd birthday. But Alexander's brilliance was so dazzling that it has obscured the fact that he was only the latest in a series of conquerors who had pursued the dream of empire across the stage of Near Eastern history, a grand procession that had already been underway for 2,000 years when Alexander first set foot on the shores of Asia in 334 B.C., a procession composed of names renowned in their own time but now mostly forgotten: Sargon, Ur-Nammu, Hattusilis, Thutmose III, Tiglath-pileser, Cyrus ... conquerors whose empires lay buried deep beneath the lands across which Alexander marched. Some of those empires were nearly as grand and mighty as Alexander's; others were more modest. Some of those empires, like Alexander's, lasted only a few decades; others endured for half a millennium. Most of those empires, unlike Alexander's, are now forgotten.

This is a course about those forgotten empires. Its purpose is to resurrect them from the dust and to restore them to their proper place in the panorama of ancient Near Eastern history. We explore 13 of them, beginning with the empire of Sargon of Akkad in the 24th century—the very first empire in all of human history—and ending more than two millennia later with the empire of Carthage, which outlived Alexander's empire but fell at last before the rising power of Rome. The course is arranged chronologically, and because it is a course about empires rather than about cultures, it focuses on the political and the military and concerns itself with religious, economic, or social issues only as they bear on imperial affairs. In treating each empire, it asks three questions fundamental to understanding any empire in any era: First, how and why did this empire come into being? Was it the creation of one man's genius and leadership, or did it arise out of broader forces? What is the story of its emergence? What opposition did it face, and how did it overcome that opposition? Second, how was this empire governed and defended? What was the relationship between its rulers and their subjects? How was it taxed? How was its army organized, equipped, and commanded? What threats did it face, and how did it confront them? And third, how and why did this empire fall? Was its decline sudden or prolonged? What factors led to its decline and fall? Did it fall due to internal decay, outside attack, or both? And how did the story of its collapse unfold? Answering these questions will require a mix of lecture formats: Some lectures will emphasize the narrative of history, while others will emphasize its analysis. In the end, these forgotten empires will stand revealed for what they were: important chapters in the drama of the history of the ancient world.

The course comprises four broad series of lectures. The first series focuses on the earliest empires in Near Eastern history, all of them concentrated in Mesopotamia. We begin with the mysterious and romantic figure of Sargon the Great, according to legend a foundling child who went on to conquer Mesopotamia and Syria. His empire was followed by the empire of Third-Dynasty Ur—the last flowering of Sumerian civilization and the only empire that Sumer ever forged. After the collapse of Sumer, Babylon first rose to greatness under Hammurabi, a great conqueror as well as a great lawgiver. Hammurabi's empire of First-Dynasty Babylon was short-lived, and in its wake, during the middle of the 2nd millennium, two empires rose to fill the void: the kingdom of the Hurrians in northern Mesopotamia, better known as Mitanni, and the Kassite empire in Babylonia. Tantalizingly little is known of either of these states, even though Mitanni dominated the northern Fertile Crescent for more than two centuries and Kassite Babylonia was the longest-lived of all Mesopotamian empires, enduring for over 400 years.

While empires rose and fell in Mesopotamia, to the north and west other empires were coming into being, which together with the empires of Mesopotamia formed what some scholars have called “the Club of the Great Powers.” These will be the focus of the second series of lectures. To the north, the Hittite peoples of central Asia Minor forged the great empire that they called Hatti. To the west, in the coastlands of the eastern Mediterranean, Egypt emerged from its nest in the Nile Valley and conquered an empire that stretched as far north as Syria, where it battled for control with both Mitanni and Hatti. As these empires jockeyed for position in the Near East, on the island of Crete, the Minoans created history's first thalassocracy, or sea empire. Meanwhile, on the mainland north of Crete, the Greeks made their bold entrance onto the stage of history as the Achaeans, under their high king at Mycenae. They quickly developed their own unique political culture and soon spread east across the Aegean to challenge Hatti for supremacy in western Asia Minor.

A terrible cataclysm brought the 2nd millennium to a end, along with the empires that had belonged to the Club of the Great Powers. Mitanni was destroyed by Hatti, but Hatti then vanished in its turn. The Egyptians were driven back inside the confines of the Nile Valley, and the empire of the Kassites collapsed. Out of the ashes rose new powers. It is to these that the third series of lectures is devoted. The hill tribes of Canaan, worshipping a god called Yahweh, united as the kingdom of Israel, briefly filling the power vacuum left by the demise of Egypt's empire before dissolving after the death of its third king, Solomon. More enduringly, a group of peoples formerly subject to Mitanni began the long process of building the empire that would cast its long shadow across the first four centuries of the last millennium: Assyria. From its heartland in northern Mesopotamia, Assyria went on to conquer Babylonia, Syria, southeastern Asia Minor, the Levant, and eventually Egypt, making it the greatest empire the Near East had yet seen, but Assyria collapsed before a last revival of Babylonian power, aided by the Medes of western Iran.

The Neo-Babylonian empire spread across the Fertile Crescent, taking up the mantle of Assyria and snuffing out the last remnant of the empire of Israel with the destruction of Judah in 587. But the Neo-Babylonians were to enjoy Assyria's mantle only briefly, for the Medes soon were overthrown by Cyrus, lord of Persis, who went on to overthrow the Neo-Babylonians as well, and all else that stood in his path, and to lay the foundations of the greatest of all Near Eastern empires: Persia.

The final series of lectures focuses on the last great Near Eastern empires, the empires of the mid-1st millennium. We begin with Persia. By the midpoint of the 1st millennium, the empire Cyrus had founded was vastly larger than any that had come before: It spanned the entire Near East, from Egypt and the Balkans to central Asia and the Indus Valley. But its size and its power failed to intimidate the tiny city-states of Greece, and Persia soon found itself locked in a 200-year-long confrontation with Greece that only ended when Alexander gave a royal funeral to Persia's last king and placed the Persian crown on his own head. The Greek conquest of Persia left only one Near Eastern power in existence, located not in the Near East but in the western Mediterranean: Carthage, a colony of Tyre, had built an empire for itself among the Phoenician settlements along the Spanish and African coasts and managed to hold its own against the Greeks in Sicily and Italy, but not against the stirring giant that was Rome. With Rome's defeat of Hannibal in the Second Punic War, the story of the empires of the Near East comes to an end.

The final lecture looks back both at the common threads that link the 13 empires of the course together and at the ways in which they are unique. It also looks forward to the one great legacy that the half-forgotten empires of the ancient Near East bestowed on Alexander and all the conquerors who followed him, from Caesar to Napoleon: the dream of empire.

Lecture One

A Meditation on Empire

Scope: The first empires in human history were created in the Near East in the late 3rd millennium B.C., and by the time the Carthaginian empire died, on the field of Zama in 201 B.C., more than a dozen Near Eastern empires had come and gone—some in glory, some in obscurity. The place to begin our study of these, the earliest empires, is by asking what makes a state an empire. Is an empire a form of government, like monarchy or democracy? Or is it a form of rule that one state exercises over the peoples and places that it brings under its sway? How do empires rise? How are they ruled, and how are they defended? And finally, why do they fall?

Outline

- I. When Alexander the Great seized the attention of the world, forging an empire that stretched from Greece to India, a dozen other empires had already come and gone in the lands he conquered. But they do not capture our attention the way that Alexander does. So why should we study them?
 - A. We should study them because of the sheer magnitude of their history.
 - B. We should also study them because they were the world's first empires.
- II. We should begin our exploration by defining our terms and by answering a few fundamental questions. The first and most basic is, what is an "empire"?
 - A. Our English word "empire" comes from the Latin word *imperium*, a word that lay at the heart of early Roman government.
 1. Originally *imperium* meant "command" or "sovereignty" and referred to the power wielded by the kings who ruled over Rome in its early days, when it was a small city-state.
 2. After the last of the kings was overthrown and Rome became a republic, *imperium* came to mean the power bestowed on Rome's senior magistrates, the consuls and the praetors.
 3. But after Rome began to conquer the empire for which it is famous, the meaning of *imperium* shifted again. It came to mean "dominion" or "realm."
 - B. What distinguishes an empire from any other political entity?
 1. When we look back at some of the best-known empires of the past, it becomes clear that "empire" does not refer to a form of government.
 2. If any sort of government can rule an empire, then maybe "empire" refers instead to the swath of territory over which that government rules. So is it size that makes an empire? It's tempting to think so, but in this as in other things, maybe we should resist temptation.
 3. If empires can be big or small, perhaps what defines an empire is the act of one ethnic group imposing its rule over other ethnic groups.
 - C. So, in the end, I think what we see is that "empire" is a subjective term. Empire, in other words, is in the eye of the beholder.
- III. Even though empire is a subjective term, it's still important for historians to study the phenomenon of empire. When we do so, we ask fundamental questions: how empires came to be, how they were governed and defended, and why they fell.
 - A. The first question has to do with the origins of empires. In asking how any empire came to be, the great historian Thucydides taught us that historical events have two types of causes: underlying and immediate.
 - B. The origins of empires turn out to be as diverse as the empires themselves.
 1. Some empires result from the energy, leadership, and genius of a single individual, usually a great conqueror, who blazes a swift and memorable trail across the pages of history.
 2. But other empires are the product of many leaders' efforts, over a long period of time; these empires grow out of the gradual development of the human, economic, and cultural resources of a people or a region.
 3. Still, whether they were the work of a single individual or the prolonged labor of an entire people, almost all empires are acquired through military conquest.
 4. We have to ask ourselves the question that in many ways is the most difficult to answer: What motivates a conqueror, a whole series of conquerors, or an entire people to acquire an empire?
 - C. Conquering an empire is the easy part. Next it must be governed and defended. Those are far more demanding and complicated tasks, as we can see from the wide range of approaches that have been used for both.
 - D. The task of defending an empire is at least as daunting as the task of governing one, and the range of approaches that have been tried is just as broad.

- E. The last question we must ask ourselves is, how do empires end? In the 18th century A.D., Edward Gibbon indelibly imprinted the notion of “decline and fall” on our minds with his magisterial work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. But every empire passes from the stage of history in its own way, at its own pace, and for its own reasons.
- IV. With such questions in mind, we will explore the rise, the climax, and the collapse of those dozen empires that rose and fell in the 2,000 years before Alexander. There is a strong Near Eastern flavor to the course, but the order in which we’ll approach those empires is chronological.
- A. We open by setting the stage with a survey of the geographical arena on which the drama of these early empires played out.
 - B. We will also scrutinize the wildly diverse types of sources on which our knowledge of the ancient Near East is founded.
 - C. The course begins in Mesopotamia, where history’s first empires were born.
 - 1. We start with the first empire in all of human history, the empire of Sargon the Great of Akkad, who in the late 3rd millennium B.C. subjugated the city-states of Sumer and went on to conquer a realm that stretched from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea.
 - 2. The empire that follows Sargon’s was the only empire ever to arise among the cities of Sumeria: Third-Dynasty Ur, often simply called “Ur III.”
 - 3. After Ur III, the course looks at one of the most famous empires in Mesopotamian history: the empire of Hammurabi.
 - 4. While Hammurabi’s empire was famous, the two empires that followed it in Mesopotamia have nearly been forgotten: Mitanni (the empire of the Hurrians) and the Kassite empire in Babylonia.
 - D. Even as Mitanni and the empire of the Kassites were emerging in Mesopotamia, the focus of imperial power began to shift to other regions, presaging Mesopotamia’s decline in the ancient world’s balance of power. New imperial powers emerged and, until the late 2nd millennium, dominated the stage of Near Eastern history.
 - E. Then, suddenly, around the year 1200, the empires that had dominated the Near East for so long all collapsed, swept away by mass movements of peoples and repeated waves of marauding raiders. The migrations of the Aramaeans and the depredations of the Sea Peoples drastically altered the balance of power, and new imperial powers emerged during the first half of the 1st millennium.
 - F. The last two Near Eastern empires explored in this course are the ones that were doomed to fall before the might of Greece and Rome, whose rising power would change the future of Western civilization: Persia and Carthage.
- V. A final word on the topical focus of the course: Because this is a course about the rise and fall of empires, it concentrates on political and military matters. Social and cultural issues are not unimportant to the rise and fall of empires, but they often play more subtle and secondary roles.

Suggested Reading:

Dunstan, *The Ancient Near East*.

Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East*.

Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why is there such imprecision associated with the meaning of the term “empire”? Is such imprecision associated with any other forms of rule or government?
2. What moral judgments are associated with the term “empire”? Are there good empires and bad empires? What distinguishes one from the other?
3. If an empire is a form of rule rather than a form of government, is it possible that an empire might transform into a different form of rule and cease to be an empire? What empires have transformed without falling and thus ceased to be empires?

Lecture Two

Lands, Seas, and Sources

Scope: The empires of the ancient Near East played out their dramatic history on a stage 5,000 miles wide, stretching from the Pillars of Hercules to the western frontier of India and from the Ukraine to the Sudan, a stage whose complex scenery of seas and mountains, plains and deserts was shaped by immense tectonic forces and the shifting climates of the post-Ice Age world. An understanding of that scenery is crucial to understanding the history that unfolded on that stage, and so also is an understanding of the nature of the sources from which we draw that history. As complex and diverse as the geography of the Near East, those sources both reveal and obscure the world they record, and they challenge anyone who would study its history to be both a detective and a historian.

Outline

- I. Because history takes place in space as well as in time, before we lay out the narratives of our empires we first need to investigate the geography of the world within which they rose and fell. That world, the world of the ancient Near East, was a vast one. It sprawled across 5,000 miles, from India to the Atlantic, and included parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, as well as the Mediterranean Sea.
 - A. Let's start by looking at where the geographical features of our planet come from—namely, continental drift, also known as plate tectonics.
 - B. In the area we're traversing in this course, no fewer than four major tectonic plates are grinding and smashing against one another.
 1. To the west, the African Plate is crushing against the Eurasian Plate. The Mediterranean, its islands, and the coastlands that surround it are the product of that slow-motion train wreck.
 2. To the east of the Mediterranean, a different tectonic process is going on: The Arabian Plate is tearing itself away from the African Plate. The Arabian Peninsula and its nearby seas are the result.
 3. As the Arabian Plate separates from Africa, it pushes north against the Eurasian Plate. Their collision has raised up the great Taurus and Zagros Mountains of modern Turkey and Iran.
 4. Finally, in the east, the Indian Plate is also smashing into the Eurasian Plate, and since when two continental plates collide, neither one will go down, both are going up. The result is the greatest mountain ridges on earth: the Hindu Kush and the Himalayas.
- II. In the middle of all this geological mayhem lies the main stage on which the empires explored in this course rose, ruled, and died: the region encompassing modern Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, and Turkey, known today as the Middle East.
 - A. The heart of this region is the area known as the Fertile Crescent. It stretches from the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates to Syria and then down between the Jordan River rift valley and the waters of the Mediterranean.
 - B. At either end of the Fertile Crescent are the great river valleys that more than any other features define the ancient Near East in the popular imagination.
 1. The broad valley shared by the rivers that Sumerians called the Idiglat and Buranum and Greeks called the Tigris and Euphrates is known by the Greek name Mesopotamia because it is the "land between the rivers."
 2. Mesopotamia is bordered to the south by the arid grasslands, the so-called desert fringe. These were inhabited by clans of nomadic herdsman.
 3. On the far side of the Fertile Crescent from Mesopotamia lies the other great river valley, even more famous than Mesopotamia: the valley of the Nile.
 4. Beyond the cliffs, the valley of the Nile is flanked by deserts both to the east and the west.
 - C. The coastal zone of the eastern Mediterranean that forms the western edge of the Fertile Crescent is called the Levant. It comprises the modern countries of Israel and Lebanon and the western parts of Syria.
 - D. Northwest of the Fertile Crescent lies Asia Minor, or Anatolia.
 - E. East of the Fertile Crescent lies another great mountainous region: Iran.
- III. The other geographical arena for this course is the Mediterranean basin, centered on the landlocked Mediterranean Sea, which extends nearly 2,300 miles, from the Straits of Gibraltar (the ancient Pillars of Hercules) to the Levant.
 - A. The Mediterranean basin is divided into two unequal parts by the Italian Peninsula and the island of Sicily.
 1. The western Mediterranean is tightly hemmed in by rugged land masses and is studded with islands.
 2. The eastern Mediterranean is about twice the size of the western Mediterranean and is much more open. It has only two major islands, which are located along its northern edge: Cyprus and Crete.

- B. Although intimately linked with the Mediterranean basin, the Aegean Sea and its adjacent lands often seem to be a world apart.
 - C. The Balkans and Anatolia face one another across the narrow straits that connect the Black Sea with the Aegean, straits known as the Bosphorus and the Hellespont (or Dardanelles). Control over these straits confers control not only over water traffic between the two seas, but also over land travel between Europe and the Near East, making this one of the most strategic and contested locations in southeastern Europe.
- IV. The availability and nature of the sources for the empires of the ancient Near East have a particularly profound effect on how we can discuss those empires' histories.
- A. The two basic types of evidence we use in exploring ancient history are documentary and archeological.
 - B. Archeological evidence has both strengths and weaknesses in exploring the history of an era.
 - 1. Its greatest strength is its fundamental honesty.
 - 2. But on the down side, archeological evidence also can't do much to explain itself. It is mute.
 - 3. If archeological evidence is all we have for an empire, it becomes nearly impossible to reconstruct that empire's history in any detail.
 - C. Given the limitations of archeological evidence, documentary evidence is fundamental to reconstructing the history of any people, culture, nation, or era. It is the very stuff of history, so much so that strictly speaking, "history" begins with the dawn of writing 5,300 years ago.
 - 1. Documentary evidence comes in many forms.
 - a. Historical writings such as those of Greek and Roman authors.
 - b. Government archives such as correspondence and memoranda, as well as personal archives such as property transactions or birth, death, and marriage records.
 - c. Inscriptions—that is, texts carved on stone or metal.
 - 2. Historians must treat documentary evidence with more skepticism than they apply to material evidence.
 - D. Documentary sources are very unevenly distributed, both as to their nature and geographically, among the empires of the ancient Near East, and this strongly shapes the sorts of narratives we can provide of those empires' histories.

Suggested Reading:

Baines and Málek, *Atlas of Ancient Egypt*.

Chavalas, *The Ancient Near East*.

Haywood, *The Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Civilizations*.

Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East*.

Manley, *The Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Egypt*.

Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*.

Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What types of geography and climate are found in the landscape of the Near (or Middle) East? What types are missing? Where are those missing types found? How are the societies and cultures of those regions different from those of the Near (or Middle) East today, and what role do you think geography and climate play in those modern differences?
2. How does the nature of our sources affect the way in which we can speak about the past, and how does it affect the way we can speak about the present? Does having audio and video source material alter the way in which we view American history and society in the late 20th century A.D. versus how we view American history and society in the pre-Revolutionary era?

Lecture Three

Sargon and the Dawn of Empire

Scope: For a millennium after the dawn of civilization, Mesopotamia was a land fragmented among nearly three dozen independent city-states, each with its own king, or *ensi*, who typically ruled over a territory only some 20 miles across. In such conditions, warfare was a regular part of life that exhausted the city-states, leaving them vulnerable. By about 2350 B.C., a slow process of consolidation had resulted in Lugalzagesi of Umma acquiring hegemony over lower Mesopotamia. At that point, the figure known as Sargon appeared on the scene. Of humble origins, he made himself master of Kish and then crushed Lugalzagesi. After founding a new capital at Akkad, during his 56-year reign he created history's first empire, encompassing all of the Fertile Crescent as far west as the Mediterranean. His grandson, Naram-Sin, pushed the empire's frontiers down the Persian Gulf and into eastern Anatolia. Though short-lived, the Akkadian empire left a memory of imperial glory that Mesopotamian rulers would long seek to emulate.

Outline

- I. Empire was born in the same place civilization was—Mesopotamia. But it took time. A thousand years after the dawn of civilization, Sumeria was still a land of small, independent city-states.
 - A. There were about three dozen city-states all told, stretching from where the Tigris and Euphrates approach one another most closely down to the rivers' mouths at the Persian Gulf.
 - B. Constitutionally, the city-states were monarchies.
 1. Their kings were known as *ensis*.
 2. The names and the lengths of the reigns of these kings are preserved in a document from around 1900 B.C. called the Sumerian king list.
 - C. Because dry land and resources were scarce, warfare was the norm among the closely packed city-states. The major cities were always at each other's throats.
 1. The king list legends claim that rulers conquered wide swaths of territory, but the truth seems to be that any conquests were both local in space and temporary in time.
 2. These constant, inconclusive wars finally came to an end around 2350, when Lugalzagesi, the ruler of Umma, conquered Ur and Uruk and then finally defeated Urukagina, king of Lagash.
 3. Even though Sumeria was at last unified, centuries of incessant warfare had drained its strength and left it vulnerable to conquest, not only from inside Sumeria but from outside as well.
- II. Enter Sargon of Akkad, who began his life as a foundling child and ended it as the founder of the first empire in all of human history. It is only the truth when we call him Sargon the Great.
 - A. Of course, our sources for his biography are full of problems.
 1. Contemporary sources are few and far between.
 2. Most of what we know about him comes from copies of inscriptions that he set up in Nippur, in the temple of Enlil.
 3. He was the focus of a lot popular epic poetry down through the 1st millennium. The romantic stories about his birth and his rise to power set the standard for stories about later culture heroes.
 - B. Reflecting on the legends, scholars have come to a consensus about Sargon's origins and rise to power.
 1. He was an outsider, not part of any Sumerian city dynasty.
 2. His questionable status and legitimacy are reflected in his name, for "Sargon" was not his actual, personal name. It is the customary form of his throne-name, Sharru-kin, which means "the king is legitimate."
 3. We know that his ascent to power began in the city of Kish, in the northern part of Sumeria.
- III. There is no doubt about the origins of the Akkadian empire: It was entirely the product of Sargon's genius.
 - A. He acted swiftly to break with the Sumerian past. Soon after he took the throne from Ur-Zababa and dragged Lugalzagesi back to Kish in a yoke, he moved his capital to an entirely new location, outside Sumeria: the city of Akkad.
 - B. Basing himself in Akkad, Sargon launched military campaigns that spanned the entire Fertile Crescent.
- IV. For two generations, Sargon's heirs defended and expanded on his legacy.
 - A. As would often be the case in the ancient Near East, rebellions followed the death of a powerful ruler. For 30 years after Sargon's death in 2278, his sons Rimush and Manishtushu fought to keep the empire intact.

- B. When he came to the throne in 2255, Sargon's grandson, Naram-Sin, also had to fight uprisings to maintain the empire.
 - C. Once he had crushed the uprisings that greeted his accession, Naram-Sin pushed the frontiers of the Akkadian empire even farther than Sargon had.
- V. Sargon and Naram-Sin forged the basic pattern that future Mesopotamian empires would follow. The core feature was centralization of authority around the person of the king.
- A. They carefully crafted a so-called royal ideology, a sort of Bronze Age propaganda, to indoctrinate their subjects with a particular image of their ruler.
 - B. In addition to crafting a royal ideology, Sargon used religion to cement the loyalty of his empire.
 - 1. Religion lay at the heart of life in Mesopotamia; it was the central feature of ancient Near Eastern existence.
 - 2. Sargon was careful to place people he could trust in key religious positions.
 - 3. Trying to control religious cults throughout the entire region, Naram-Sin expanded on Sargon's practice by appointing several of his daughters to priesthoods in other cities.
 - C. Sargon tried to create a larger, imperial system out of the independent city-states of Mesopotamia.
 - 1. He tried to find a balance between loyalty to the larger imperial entity he had created and the old local loyalties whose roots ran so deep.
 - 2. To standardize the administration of his empire, and to help break down local loyalties, Sargon made Akkadian the language of imperial administration and record keeping.
 - 3. Sargon and Naram-Sin also centralized the recording of time, standardizing the system of year names throughout the empire.
 - 4. To provide the vast revenues that his empire needed, Sargon created a new system of taxation.
 - 5. Naram-Sin took his grandfather's centralization a step further and imposed universal accounting standards and systems of weights and measures for use in taxation and imperial bookkeeping.
 - D. In their territories outside Mesopotamia, Sargon and Naram-Sin took a flexible approach to imperial government. They employed a variety of administrative techniques, adapted to local circumstances and requirements.
 - E. The task of conquering such a vast empire—and maintaining internal and external security once it was conquered—demanded a powerful military machine.
 - 1. Sargon created a standing army, perhaps the first in all of history.
 - 2. Sargon supplemented this professional army with additional troops from other sources.
 - 3. Sargon and Naram-Sin also built fortresses to hold the units of the regular army and to secure the empire's territories.
- VI. The collapse of the Akkadian empire was swift and can be traced to a combination of internal and external factors.
- A. A fundamental problem was relentless Sumerian hostility. Even after a century of Akkadian rule, the city aristocracies still nurtured dreams of independence.
 - B. Naram-Sin aroused special resentment among the subject peoples of the empire. This is reflected in the bitter hostility of later tradition to his memory, a hostility that is particularly religious in flavor.
 - C. When it came, the collapse of the Akkadian empire happened very swiftly, after the reign of Naram-Sin's son and successor, Sharkalisharri, who ascended to the throne after his father's death in 2217 and reigned until 2193.
 - D. By 2190, the area under the control of Dudu, the new king of Akkad, had shrunk back to the vicinity of Akkad itself, and Mesopotamia had gone back to being a region of small, independent city-states.

Suggested Reading:

Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East*.

Roux, *Ancient Iraq*.

Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. What enabled Sargon to create an empire where nearly a thousand years of capable Sumerian rulers who had preceded him had failed to do more than secure control over a portion of lower Mesopotamia?
- 2. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the way in which the Akkadian empire was organized and administered? Did some flaw doom it to collapse, or might it have endured? What was the flaw, and what might have been done to prolong the empire's existence?

Lecture Four

The Third Dynasty of Ur

Scope: After the collapse of the Akkadian empire, the Third Dynasty of Ur rose to power. Emerging at the end of the 3rd millennium B.C., it was the only imperial dynasty ever to arise in Sumeria. While the details of life in Ur III are abundantly documented, thanks to the recovery of hundreds of thousands of cuneiform texts, its historical narrative is less than clear. Its founder appears to have been Ur-Nammu, who, together with his son and successor, Shulgi, created an empire that was more compact than the Akkadian empire had been, comprising central and lower Mesopotamia. But it was far more centralized, with most aspects of economic activity planned and run by the state and managed by an elaborate bureaucracy. Imperial administration was also centralized, with the empire divided into provinces run by royal governors. Intense centralization made the system fragile, though, and in the face of economic shocks, it collapsed after barely a century.

Outline

- I. For 100 years after the collapse of Akkad, Mesopotamia reverted to its primal state of political anarchy. Then in the late 22nd century B.C., an imperial dynasty briefly rose to power in Sumeria itself. It called itself the Kingdom of Sumer and Akkad, but we call it Third-Dynasty Ur.
 - A. The sources for Ur III are more abundant than for any other period in Mesopotamian history. But these texts don't provide us with accounts of events. They contain almost no narrative information about Ur III's history.
 - B. The origins of the dynasty and how it came to power are obscure.
 1. It appears that the foundations of Ur's control over lower Mesopotamia were actually laid by a king of Uruk named Utuhegal.
 2. Supposedly, the founder of Ur III came to power immediately after Utuhegal's tragic demise. His name was Ur-Nammu. While Utuhegal was a liberator, Ur-Nammu was a conqueror.
 3. Ur-Nammu was followed on the throne by his son Shulgi, who reigned for 48 years, until 2047. On the whole, his rule was a peaceful time.
- II. Ur III's empire was more compact than Akkad's. It was focused on central and southern Mesopotamia and southwestern Iran.
 - A. Shulgi was the architect of Ur III's governmental and administrative structure. At the heart of what he created was history's first centrally planned and state-run economy.
 1. All the temple and city economies were welded into a single imperial system.
 2. The irrigation system of southern and central Mesopotamia was put under direct royal control.
 3. The government took over and directly operated key industries, international trade, livestock maintenance, and even labor resources.
 4. Exercising such intricate and microscopic control over the resources of an entire society spread across several hundred miles of thickly populated territory required an elaborate bureaucracy.
 - B. Like Akkad, Ur III crafted a royal ideology to mold the image of the king and to cement loyalty to his rule.
 1. Much of our information about it comes from so-called royal hymns, which stress the legitimacy of the king through his royal descent and dwell at length on his extraordinary qualities.
 2. The hymns show that Ur III strongly emphasized the divine aspect of kingship. The king was divinely born and was appointed by the highest gods.
 3. The royal hymns of Ur III portray the king as the ideal soldier and a perfect military commander, a fearless hunter, a nurturer of the land and the culture, a supremely fair judge, and a peerless intellect.
 4. They tell us the king's subjects love and respect him, as later generations ought to also, and the kingdom is united and harmonious, with him as the focus of that unity, its one supreme ruler.
 - C. Ur III's kings also tried to cement loyalty to their rule by aggressively promoting Sumerian culture and identity.
 1. They worked particularly hard to forge close political and cultural links between Ur and the city of Uruk, forging genealogies for themselves that linked them with legendary figures in Uruk's mythical past.
 2. Central to this program of cultural nationalism was Ur III's sponsorship of literary activity in the Sumerian language, an effort that was so successful that the period is now called the Sumerian Renaissance.
- III. The centralization that characterized Ur III's economy was paralleled by an equal centralization of its administration. Ur III created the first truly imperial system of administration, subdividing the empire into administrative units directly subordinated to the central government.
 - A. The empire was marked off into two major zones.

1. The imperial heartland of Sumer and Akkad.
 2. A military zone to the east, between the Tigris and the Zagros mountains.
- B. The first zone, the heartland, which comprised central and southern Mesopotamia including the Diyala Valley, was divided into about 20 provinces.
1. Basically, these were the territories of the formerly independent city-states, which now served as the provinces' capitals.
 2. The provinces were ruled by governors with the familiar title of *ensi*.
 3. Shulgi established a military administration in the heartland region as well, separate from the civil administration.
 4. Shulgi created a strongly centralized system of taxation that extracted a significant part of the heartland provinces' resources.
- C. In the second zone, the frontier lands on the empire's eastern periphery, Shulgi imposed direct military government.
1. Control of the frontier zone, on which the security of the state depended, lay in the hands of an official called the *sukkulmah*.
 2. The *sukkulmah* tasked the *shagina* with collecting tribute, which usually took the form of livestock.
- D. To facilitate the movement of troops and goods, the kings of Ur III built a network of roads that ran throughout their empire.
- IV. After barely a century of existence, the empire of Ur III suddenly disintegrated.
- A. The underlying cause of the empire's collapse was undoubtedly its dependence on central planning.
 - B. The immediate cause of the empire's collapse was a nomadic invasion that upset the delicate balance of the centrally planned state economy. Hints of trouble began to appear in the reign of Shur-Sin, between 2037 and 2029. These rapidly boiled into a crisis in the reign of his successor, Ibbi-Sin, who ruled until 2004.
 - C. With the collapse of Ur III, Mesopotamia lapsed back into its previous state: a patchwork of independent principalities.

Suggested Reading:

Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East*.

Roux, *Ancient Iraq*.

Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East*.

Questions to Consider:

1. To what extent did Ur III model itself on the empire of Akkad? In what ways was it different?
2. What would have led Ur-Nammu and Shulgi to fashion such a strongly centralized economic and administrative system for their empire?
3. What makes strongly centralized systems such as Ur III's so fragile, and why are the rulers of such systems blind to their vulnerability?

Lecture Five

The Empire of Hammurabi

Scope: After the collapse of the empire of Ur III, Mesopotamia dissolved into a series of small local and regional states. Out of this confusion there arose in northern Mesopotamia the proto-Assyrian kingdom of Shamshi-Adad, which briefly restored unity. When it collapsed in turn, one of Shamshi-Adad's vassals, Hammurabi, the ruler of the hitherto unimportant town of Babylon in central Mesopotamia, emerged to fill the void. In a brief but spectacular career of conquest, Hammurabi forged an empire that extended from southern Mesopotamia to Syria, calling himself "the king who made the four quarters of the world obedient." A meticulous overseer, Hammurabi chose his administrators carefully and corresponded with them frequently about their duties. He undertook extensive land-reclamation projects and finally, at the end of his reign, promulgated his famous code. His empire did not long survive his death, disintegrating within a generation, but Babylon remained as the center of Mesopotamian life, and Mesopotamia ever after was known as Babylonia.

Outline

- I. In the political vacuum left by the disintegration of Ur III's empire, a number of local and regional kingdoms jockeyed with one another for power.
 - A. In southern Mesopotamia, Isin and Larsa competed for dominance.
 - B. Meanwhile, in northern Mesopotamia, the Amorite adventurer Shamshi-Adad created a realm known to historians as the kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia, centered around Ashur.
- II. The power vacuum left by the breakup of Shamshi-Adad's kingdom didn't last long. In central Mesopotamia, Babylon rose to fill the void under the leadership of another Amorite: Hammurabi, probably the most famous king in all of Mesopotamian history.
 - A. The city of Babylon itself had been founded far back in the 3rd millennium B.C.
 1. The name "Babylon" is Greek, a derivation of the Akkadian name *bāb ilim*, which means "God's gate."
 2. The ruins of Babylon you can see in Iraq today are not those of the original Babylon; they are the remains of the Neo-Babylonian city, which is about 2,000 years younger. Hammurabi's Babylon was between the two and would have been far more modest than the Neo-Babylonian town.
 3. Babylon lies at a very strategic location on the banks of the Euphrates, at the narrows of central Mesopotamia, near the point where the Tigris and the Euphrates approach one another most closely. This means that whoever controls Babylon can control traffic on both rivers and can easily travel north or south within Mesopotamia.
 - B. The sources for Hammurabi's Babylon give us only an incomplete picture of his times and his empire.
 1. Any clay tablets contained in the lower archeological levels of the site have dissolved in the saturated subsoil.
 2. Since we don't have cuneiform archives from Babylon itself, we have to turn to archives from Babylon's dependencies.
 3. Another source of information is inscriptions on durable materials like stone. The most famous of these inscriptions is the Code of Hammurabi, which was found by French archeologists in 1902 A.D.
 4. As was the case with Ur III, our best historical source for events in Hammurabi's empire is the naming of years, a practice that dates back to Akkad. The names commemorate the significant event or events in each year.
 - C. Hammurabi was the sixth ruler in the First Dynasty of Babylon, but before he came to the throne, Babylon had been only a minor player in Mesopotamian affairs.
- III. Hammurabi's empire was his own personal creation. Its rise, its rule, and its decline are all intimately bound up with his energy and his talents, both as a military commander and as a ruler.
 - A. After he came to the throne of Babylon, Hammurabi consolidated his position by showering favors on the religious establishment in his principality.
 - B. Hammurabi's relationship with Shamshi-Adad is intriguing. From his accession until Shamshi-Adad's death in 1776 B.C., Hammurabi loyally served the king of Upper Mesopotamia both as a vassal ruler and a military commander.
 - C. Between 1780 and 1764, Hammurabi focused his energies on public works projects in his own principality.
 - D. After Shamshi-Adad's death and the collapse of his kingdom, Hammurabi was free to pursue power in his own right. But he seems to have waited a dozen years before doing so. We have no idea why.
 - E. Once he began, though, he moved with blinding speed. In a series of lightning campaigns, he conquered an empire as large as that of Ur III.

- F. After 1755, after a career of conquest that had spanned no more than 10 years, Hammurabi was *the* major power in the Fertile Crescent. It was with good reason that he could call himself “the king who made the four quarters of the world obedient.”
- IV. After he had conquered his empire, Hammurabi was faced with the task of running it. He proved to be a conscientious ruler, but it looks like he had trouble adjusting his small-town style to the demands of administering a large territorial state.
- A. The best-known example of his activity as an administrator is his famous code.
 - B. Royal ideology also emphasized the role of the king as caretaker, providing his people with fields and the water to irrigate them. Scrupulous to a fault, Hammurabi undertook land-reclamation and irrigation schemes to expand the productive capacity of his realm.
 - C. The royal ideology demanded that the king be devout toward the gods.
 - 1. Hammurabi’s activity in building and refurbishing temples gave tangible proof of his piety and secured the favor of the priesthoods.
 - 2. His most important deity was Marduk, the chief god of Babylon. Thanks to Hammurabi’s conquests, Marduk became the chief deity of the Mesopotamian pantheon.
 - D. Hammurabi’s activity as a conqueror also fit neatly with Near Eastern royal ideology.
 - E. We know very little about Hammurabi’s army and its organization.
 - 1. The fact that he is repeatedly said to have built fortresses around his realm implies that he had a standing army with which to garrison them.
 - 2. The evidence of the code demonstrates that there was also an active reserve force of soldiers who were given lands by the crown for their support.
 - 3. The code also mentions officers above the soldiers, but it says little about their duties, other than that they were responsible for mustering troops.
 - F. According to archival sources, Hammurabi was a micromanager who deeply involved himself in the running of his empire.
- V. After Hammurabi’s death in 1750, his empire swiftly collapsed.
- A. Within 10 years of coming to the throne, his son, Samsuiluna, was faced with major rebellions among the subject peoples of the empire. He had only limited success in maintaining his authority.
 - B. The causes of the decline and fall of the First Dynasty empire are complex.
 - 1. The fact that its problems were not solely political is indicated by the fact that major centers like Nippur and Ur were abandoned by their inhabitants at about the same time as the empire’s collapse.
 - 2. Part of the cause of the empire’s collapse may have been alienation caused by Babylon’s brutal punishment of rebellion.
 - 3. The empire’s centralizing economic policies may have weakened it, too.
 - 4. But we shouldn’t overlook the personal factor: Hammurabi was a micromanager, who ran his empire with the same attention to every detail that was appropriate for governing the modest principality whose throne he had inherited. That style was not a good one for running a large empire. When Hammurabi died, he left his successors no institutions of administration, only a vacant throne.
 - C. Hammurabi’s most enduring accomplishment was to permanently alter the political focus and identity of Mesopotamia.

Suggested Reading:

Leick, *The Babylonians*.

Oates, *Babylon*.

Roux, *Ancient Iraq*.

Van de Mieroop, *King Hammurabi of Babylon*.

Questions to Consider:

1. To what extent does Hammurabi’s government of his empire resemble the governments of Ur III and the Akkadian empire? In what ways is it different? What personal, cultural, or economic factors account for those similarities or differences?
2. Do you agree that Hammurabi’s empire was the construct of one man’s talents, or do you think that it was grounded in broader factors? Why?
3. What explains the fact that although Hammurabi’s empire was so short-lived, the city of Babylon, previously so unimportant, retained its place as the focus of Mesopotamian life and identity?

Lecture Six

Mitanni and the Kassites

Scope: During much of the last half of the 2nd millennium B.C., Mesopotamia and the northern Fertile Crescent were ruled by two large empires that have been virtually lost to history: the Kassite kingdom of Babylonia and the Hurrian kingdom of Mitanni, or Hanigalbat. The problem is sheer scarcity of source material, a scarcity so severe that we barely know the names of their kings—and usually almost nothing of what they did—except through the records of their neighbors. Those records make it clear that both kingdoms were mighty in their day. Mitanni fought with the Hittites for control over eastern Anatolia and with Egypt for control over southern Syria and northern Palestine. The Kassite kingdom lasted four centuries and was an important rival to the rising imperial power of Assyria. But the Hittites and Assyrians eventually laid both Mitanni and the Kassites low, and now little of them survives but their names.

Outline

- I. New states, founded by outsiders, rose to fill the void left by the collapse of Hammurabi's empire. In northern Mesopotamia, a kingdom emerged that was called by its people the Land of the Hurrians but that was known to its neighbors as Hanigalbat, or Mitanni.
 - A. Much remains mysterious about the Hurrians and Mitanni.
 1. We don't even know the location of Mitanni's capital, Washshukanni, nor do we know the names of most of Mitanni's rulers or the dates of their reigns.
 2. Even the Hurrian language is an enigma. We don't know for sure what its linguistic affiliations were, so we have a hard time figuring out where the Hurrians originated before they showed up in the Near East.
 - B. When they first appeared on the stage of Near Eastern history, the Hurrians lived in the Caucasus. They slowly infiltrated into northern Mesopotamia and Syria during the late 3rd millennium B.C. By the early 2nd millennium, they had established a significant presence in the communities of the northern Fertile Crescent.
- II. It was some time in the middle of the 2nd millennium that the Hurrians founded the kingdom of Mitanni. At the zenith of its power, Mitanni ruled over an area from northern Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean coast of Syria.
 - A. Two factors led to its rise.
 1. One was the power vacuum in northern Mesopotamia.
 2. The second appears to have been the arrival of an Indo-Iranian group among the Hurrians.
 3. The scattered Hurrian principalities of upper Mesopotamia finally coalesced into the kingdom of Mitanni sometime between about 1550 and 1500.
 - B. As an empire, Mitanni differed sharply from most of its predecessors in the ancient Near East. It was a decentralized state with a lot of similarities to feudalism.
 1. Instead of a centrally administered system of provinces, the kingdom of Mitanni appears to have comprised a network of client states bound to the Hurrian king by oaths of loyalty.
 2. In line with this decentralization, the Mitannian king appears to have functioned primarily as a kind of high king or war leader.
 - C. We know very little about the kings or their activities. We have the names of about a dozen of them, but almost nothing more.
 - D. The heart of the Mitannian army lay in its chariot corps. Called the *mariyannu*, the chariot corps was commanded in person by the king, forming something like a royal guard.
 - E. Because of its location in northern Mesopotamia and Syria, Mitanni faced rivals on several fronts.
 1. Its most dangerous rival lay to the west, in Anatolia: the Hittite empire of Hatti. Relations between Hatti and Mitanni were rarely cordial.
 2. Meanwhile, south of Syria in the Levant, throughout the 15th century, conflict flared between Mitanni and the rapidly expanding Egyptian empire.
- III. Mitanni collapsed in the 14th century. The causes of its collapse are as murky as the rest of Mitanni's history.
 - A. The underlying cause may have lain in the nature of Mitanni's imperial system, such as it was. Its decentralized, semifederal structure left it vulnerable to attack from its powerful and ambitious neighbors.
 - B. The immediate cause seems to have been political upheaval within the Mitannian royal house, which gave an opening to its enemies.
 1. In the late 14th century, there was a civil war for the Mitannian throne between two rival princes.
 2. In the midst of the civil war, Mitanni's neighbors pounced and dismembered the kingdom.

3. By 1320, Mitanni as an independent kingdom had ceased to exist.
- IV. As Mitanni was rising to power in the northern Fertile Crescent, to the south a people named the Kassites moved into the vacuum left behind by the Hittite sack of Babylon in 1595, and they united Babylonia under their authority.
 - A. The Kassites appear in Babylonian records from the early years of the 2nd millennium, both as mercenaries and as small groups living on the fringes of northern Mesopotamia and raiding cities in the region.
 - B. The Kassites' great accomplishment was to complete the welding of Mesopotamia into a cohesive and self-conscious unit that thought of itself as "Babylonia" rather than the collection of quarreling city-states and petty principalities that it had been for so long.
 - C. But perhaps the most remarkable thing about Kassite rule is its sheer duration: Their Babylonian empire lasted 440 years, until 1155, longer than any other empire in the Near East—and longer than any other empire outside the Near East, too, until the time of Rome.
 - D. What enabled the Kassites to capitalize on the Babylonian power vacuum and establish their kingdom is a mystery. For a long time, historians thought it was their introduction of the light, two-wheeled chariot and the cavalry horse. That idea has been rejected.
 - E. It was in the decades following the Hittite raid on Babylon that the Kassites emerged from obscurity and took control of central and lower Mesopotamia.
- V. The Kassites were part of what has been called "the Club of the Great Powers," a network of empires that dominated the Near East during the middle and late 2nd millennium. The members of the club were closely linked to one another by diplomatic exchanges.
 - A. The club's roster included New Kingdom Egypt, Hatti, the Kassites, and, eventually, Assyria.
 - B. The equality of the member monarchs was indicated by the fact that they addressed one another as "brother."
 - C. The Amarna letters from New Kingdom Egypt cast particular light on the mechanisms of this great-power diplomacy.
- VI. Kassite rule brought important changes to Mesopotamian economic and social organization. Private land ownership replaced the communal holdings of the past. Thanks to the introduction of private land ownership, Mesopotamian society became highly stratified.
- VII. The Kassite kingdom finally collapsed, starting in the late 13th and into the 12th century. The most fundamental cause was geopolitical: Babylonia was exposed to powerful enemies on three sides.

Suggested Reading:

Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East*.

Roux, *Ancient Iraq*.

Wilhelm, *The Hurrians*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What enabled the Kassites and Hurrians to rise from obscurity to imperial power?
2. How did the organization of the kingdoms of Mitanni and Kassite Babylonia resemble the organization of other kingdoms in the ancient Near East? How was their organization different? What accounts for those similarities or differences?
3. Given the long history of political localism and rebellion against regional authority in Mesopotamia, why was the Kassite kingdom in Babylonia able to endure as long as it did?
4. What weaknesses undermined the kingdoms of Mitanni and Kassite Babylonia, leading to their fall? What might have been done to remedy those weaknesses?

Lecture Seven

The Rise of Hatti

Scope: Hatti, the empire of the Hittites, was the first Near Eastern empire to emerge outside of the great river valleys. Its Anatolian heartland was a high plateau of hills, woods, and grasslands, populated by an ethnically and linguistically diverse population dwelling in towns and villages rather than large cities, with a mixed pastoral and agrarian economy. Our sources for Hittite history and life are good, thanks to the discovery of the royal archives in the capital of Hattusas. The Hittites created their first empire during the Old Hittite period in the mid-2nd millennium B.C., during the reign of Hattusilis I. The zenith of its power came with Mursilis I's destruction of Babylon in 1595. After his assassination, though, chaos reigned on the throne of Hatti, and the Hittite empire disintegrated, beginning a pattern of rise and decline that was to characterize the rest of Hittite history.

Outline

- I. The Hittites, rulers of the land they called Hatti, created the first Near Eastern empire to emerge outside the great river valleys of Mesopotamia and the Nile. For half a millennium, from their homeland in central Anatolia, the Hittites played a role in Near Eastern politics equal to the traditional great powers of Mesopotamia and Egypt.
 - A. Anatolia's geography differs significantly from that of the Fertile Crescent. It is a peninsula formed by the geological collision of several tectonic plates. It consists of a rugged plateau ringed by mountains.
 - B. The Anatolian climate is dry and cool.
 - C. Geography and climate combined to produce a different economy and society in the interior of Anatolia than the coastal areas or the nearby Fertile Crescent. It was a place suitable for pastoralism—the herding of livestock such as cattle, sheep, and goats—and for dry farming.
 - D. Geography and climate also produced a different political structure from elsewhere. They favored a less centralized form of governmental authority than the more open and accessible terrain to the south.
- II. Hittite sources for the history of Hatti are plentiful, but establishing precise dates for the events in that history presents big challenges.
 - A. Our main sources for Hittite history consist of a huge library of texts unearthed at the Hittite capital of Hattusas, in central Anatolia.
 - B. It is only from about 1650 B.C. on that we can reconstruct Hittite history with any confidence, and even then dates through all of Hittite history are very approximate.
 1. The Hittites didn't leave behind a king list with regnal lengths, so we don't have precise regnal years for any Hittite kings.
 2. The guideposts we use for Hittite chronology depend on our making correlations with material and dates from outside Anatolia.
- III. The Hittites' origins are shrouded in the mists of early 2nd-millennium Anatolia.
 - A. By around 2000, Asia Minor was home to a multitude of peoples speaking a profusion of languages, living in a host of little kingdoms.
 - B. The origins of the Hittite kingdom seem to be bound up with Assyrian trade activity in the early 2nd millennium.
 - C. The progenitors of the Hittite kingdom were the Anatolian princelings Pitkhana and his son Anitta, lords of the now-lost city of Kussara in the early 18th century. They conquered Nesa and made it their capital. Starting an autobiographical tradition that Hittite rulers would emulate, Anitta left us an account his exploits in the so-called Anitta text.
 - D. Pitkhana and Anitta's kingdom collapsed soon after Anitta's death, but in the memory of later Hittite kings, Anitta was revered as the founder of their dynasty.
- IV. The Hittites' rise to power began with the so-called Old Kingdom.
 - A. The founder of the Old Kingdom, and the first great Hittite ruler, was Hattusilis I, who came to the throne around 1650 and ruled for about 30 years.
 1. Like Anitta, he was prince of the city of Kussara, and he had ambitions, so he conquered Hattusas and moved his capital there.
 2. Hattusilis was a warrior king. He left us an account of his exploits in the so-called political testament of Hattusilis.

3. The purpose behind Hattusilis's campaigns isn't clear. Some scholars have suggested an economic motive—that Hattusilis sought access to and control over the important trade routes that ran through northern Syria, linking Mesopotamia with the port cities of the Levant.
- B. In the late 1620s, during the last years of Hattusilis's life, there was a dynastic crisis.
 1. Hattusilis's children had proven disloyal to their father. After a series of struggles and treaties, his grandson Mursilis I came to the throne around 1620.
 2. Like Hattusilis, Mursilis I was a warrior king who not only consolidated his grandfather's conquests but also led Hittite armies on victorious expeditions to far-away places. He could do this because, according to our sources, Hatti was secure during his reign.
 3. Following in his grandfather's footsteps, Mursilis campaigned into northern Syria, evidently to clear up Hattusilis's unfinished business.
 4. The destruction of Aleppo was followed by Mursilis's most spectacular exploit: his invasion of Mesopotamia and his destruction of Babylon itself, along with the remnants of Hammurabi's First Dynasty empire, in 1595.
 5. The most enduring effect of Mursilis destroying Aleppo and Babylon was the obliteration of the regional power system that had stabilized both Syria and Mesopotamia.
- C. Not long after the sack of Babylon, Mursilis was assassinated by his brother-in-law Hantilis, who seized power and reigned to about 1560. But Hatti fell into the swirling chaos that was engulfing the Near East. Order only began to be restored with the accession of Telepinus around 1525.
 1. Telepinus provided an account of the dark years of chaos in the so-called Edict of Telepinus.
 2. Telepinus's most enduring legacy was to lay out clear and orderly guidelines for the succession to the throne.
- D. Telepinus died without an heir, and the 70 years between about 1500 and 1430 are shrouded in obscurity.
 1. His efforts to restore order by regulating the rules of royal accession failed to bear immediate fruit.
 2. In an ominous development, during the years after Telepinus, a new enemy appeared in northern Anatolia: the Gasga.

Suggested Reading:

Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*.

Gurney, *The Hittites*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How might the geography and climate of Anatolia have contributed to the diversity of its peoples? How might this diversity have affected the nature of Hatti?
2. What enabled Hattusilis to create the first Hittite empire? How was it similar to the empires that had come before it in the Near East? How was it different?
3. How did the creators of the Hittite empire see themselves in relation to the history and exploits of previous Near Eastern conquerors?

Lecture Eight

The Government of Hatti

Scope: The structure of the Hittite empire resembled the feudalism of the subsequent Middle Ages, built around mutual obligations of loyalty between the Great King and his subjects. The king was the supreme judicial, religious, and military authority. All major criminal cases lay under the jurisdiction of his judges; he was the high priest of all the gods of Hatti (though not divine himself); and he was the commander in chief of the army, typically taking the field in person. Overseeing the empire in the king's name were several viceroys—usually members of the royal family—as well as provincial governors and, at the local level, town mayors and village headmen, all served by an extensive bureaucracy. But most of Hatti consisted of vassal states, whose rulers were bound in loyalty to the Great King by feudal-style personal oaths.

Outline

- I. As the troubled decades following Mursilis I's death had shown, Hatti was a loose-knit realm. The glue that held it together was the bonds of loyalty that existed between the Great King and his subjects, both aristocrats and commoners.
 - A. Although the Hittites lacked the sort of elaborate royal ideology common to other Near Eastern states, the central element in the government of Hatti was the Great King, who in Hittite was called the Labarna.
 - B. There were three basic dimensions to the Great King's authority: judicial, religious, and military—the classic tripartite powers of the Bronze Age Indo-European ruler.
 1. In the judicial sphere, as the deputy of the Sun God, the Great King was the supreme judge of the land.
 2. In the religious sphere, the Great King was officially regarded as the high priest of all the gods of Hatti. Though his relationship with the gods was very close, the Great King was not regarded as a god.
 3. In the military sphere, the Great King was supreme commander of the Hittite army. All Hittite kings seem to have campaigned actively and, whenever possible, to have led their armies in person.
 - C. From the late 15th century B.C. on, the succession to the throne was carefully regulated, and the rules that Telepinus established to govern it were respected until shortly before the empire collapsed.
- II. The Great King presided over an imperial system that was a complex blend of hierarchy, bureaucracy, and feudalism.
 - A. The top officials in the imperial hierarchy were the viceroys, whose role was to provide close, constant, and politically reliable supervision of strategic or vulnerable sectors along the imperial periphery.
 - B. The duties of Hittite officials below the level of viceroy are known to us through the written instructions they received from the king, laying out their duties.
 - C. The empire's core territories were divided into province-like districts that were administered by governors who bore the title *auriyas ishas*, or “lord of the watchtower.”
 - D. The landscape of Hatti was dotted with a scattering of cities and numerous small towns, villages, and hamlets. The local governments of these places also played an important role in imperial administration.
 - E. To function, the administration of Hatti must have included a large clerical staff.
 1. The Great King would normally have communicated with his viceroys, governors, magistrates, and local officials in writing. The large archive discovered in the capital at Hattusas proves that the Hittites were scrupulous record keepers.
 2. The routine chore of making the empire function by recording and maintaining royal correspondence and records was performed by scribes.
 3. The Hittites kept records in a wide variety of languages, reflecting the multicultural nature both of Bronze Age Anatolia and of the Near East in the 2nd millennium. This means either that scribes had to be literate in a number of languages or that a large number of scribes was necessary.
 4. Given their importance to the functioning of the empire, it comes as no surprise that scribes achieved great influence and high rank within the imperial administration.
- III. The feudal character of the Hittite empire derived from the fact that so much of it consisted of vassal states.
 - A. Vassal rulers were bound to the Great King of Hatti by treaties that defined their mutual obligations and carefully delineated each vassal ruler's authority.
 1. These so-called vassal treaties may have originally been modeled on the instructions given to royal officials in the army, the palace, and the bureaucracy, which as we have seen specify in great detail the royal officials' duties and authority.
 2. The treaties stress the fact that the vassals are dependents of the king.
 3. It was expected that vassals would publicly demonstrate their loyalty to the king in a variety of ways.

- B. Oaths and marriage were key components in the bonds of loyalty. This was true both for relations between the king and his vassals and between the king and his officials.
 - 1. Vassal treaties were cemented by exchanges of oaths, sworn by the gods of Hatti and of the vassal kingdom, as well as by the earth, sea, mountains, and rivers of each land. Treaties were witnessed by the high officials of both realms, whose names were appended to the treaty texts, and the texts themselves were inscribed on metal tablets.
 - 2. Relations with vassal kings could be further cemented by marrying them to princesses of the Hittite royal family.
 - 3. The loyalty oaths that royal officials swore to the Great King were also buttressed by royal marriages.

Suggested Reading:

Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*.

———, *Life and Society in the Hittite World*.

Gurney, *The Hittites*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. Why did the Hittites assume direct rule of some areas, placing them under viceroys and governors, but leave others as vassal states?
- 2. How was Hittite imperial rule different from that of the empires of the great river valleys? In what sense was it an adaptation to the geographical, economic, and social conditions of Anatolia?

Lecture Nine

Hatti at War

Scope: In Hatti, an empire faced by threats on all fronts, life and history were dominated by warfare to an extent unknown in most other ancient Near Eastern empires. Because of this, war was seen by the Hittites as a normal part of the human condition, and the army was second only to the Great King as an institution in the Hittite empire. The army had a complex command structure, headed by the king and staffed by a professional and experienced officer corps. The core of the army was the royal guard: professional, full-time soldiers recruited from among ethnic Hittites. They were supplemented on campaign by provincial levies and vassal troops. All Hittite troops swore oaths of loyalty to the Great King. The main combat branches were the chariotry and infantry, organized into units on the decimal principle. The Hittite army also had sophisticated siege warfare capability and an excellent intelligence service.

Outline

- I. The history of Hatti was a history of war. From the days of Pitkhana and Anitta in the 18th century B.C., every Hittite ruler had to fight—either to win the kingdom, to defend the kingdom, or to expand the kingdom.
 - A. There are several reasons why Hittite history was so dominated by warfare.
 1. The main one is that Hatti faced threats from every direction.
 2. But war played an important economic role as well. It produced revenue in the form of booty pillaged from Hatti's neighbors.
 - B. Given the prevalence of war in Hittite history, it comes as no surprise that the Hittites saw war as an inevitable part of the human condition. But Hittite kings evinced little pleasure in war and rarely boasted of their victories.
 1. Hittite art offers none of the examples we find in Egyptian and Assyrian art of kings destroying their enemies in battle or exalting over the bodies of their slain foes.
 2. In recounting royal victories, Hittite records give brief, businesslike accounts.
 3. Hittite kings dwelt more on their efforts to avoid war than they did on their exploits once it broke out and preferred to depict themselves as fighting defensive wars—reacting to unprovoked aggression by their enemies or rebellion by subjects—rather than as conquerors.
- II. The Hittite army had an elaborate command structure.
 - A. The Great King normally led the army in person. Royal princes were trained from early adolescence in the military arts and were given field commands once they were grown.
 1. If simultaneous campaigning on more than one front was necessary, the Great King would delegate command of the second front to a deputy.
 2. Although the Great King exercised personal command of the army in the field, he doesn't seem to have participated in combat.
 3. Hittite kings took a very active role not only in commanding the army but also in administering it.
 - B. The complexity of the army's command structure is most apparent in the officer corps. Below the Great King himself, there were six levels of officer rank.
- III. The structure of the Hittite army reflected the governmental structure of the empire.
 - A. The army consisted of a variety of different types of troops, recruited from different sources and serving under different conditions.
 1. The core of the Hittite army was the standing army, or royal militia, of the Great King.
 2. Allied states contributed units under their own officers, who were then stationed in strategic places around the empire—but, as a security precaution, usually far from their homelands.
 3. For campaigns requiring larger forces than the royal militia, the Great King could call up levies from the provinces and the cities.
 4. Vassal kings would also provide troops for Hittite campaigns.
 5. When they were inducted into the army, soldiers and junior officers had to swear elaborate oaths of loyalty to the Great King, including a bringing down of curses on their heads if they were disloyal.
 - B. The Hittite army was organized into two main branches: the chariotry and the infantry.
 1. The chariotry was the senior arm. Chariot tactics required intensive training both of men and of horses, which also inculcated a strong sense of professionalism and pride within the chariot corps.
 2. We have less information about Hittite infantry than we do about the chariot corps. We don't know what sorts of formations they fought in, but a phalanx-style mass formation a dozen ranks deep was typical of other Near Eastern infantry.

3. Among the Hittites, cavalry was a minor element. Because saddles were primitive and horses were small, they were light troops, used primarily as scouts and messengers rather than in combat.
- C. Hittite arms and armor indicate that mobility was a prime consideration in equipping the troops.
- D. The unit structure of the Hittite army is a bit of a mystery. We also are not sure how large the Hittite army was. This is usually the case with ancient armies.

IV. The Hittites approached war in a very systematic fashion.

- A. Like the rest of Hittite life, religion permeated the planning and execution of Hittite military campaigns.
- B. The methods of supplying Hittite armies in the field varied depending on whose territory they were traversing.
 1. Inside Hittite territory, troops were supplied from royal depots and carried rations with them on the march. There were strict rules governing their treatment of the population, even when suppressing rebellions.
 2. Once in enemy territory, a ceremony was held removing the bars on behavior, and the army supplied itself by plundering.
- C. The Hittites adapted their campaign tactics to the enemies they faced. Those tactics often aimed at terrorizing the opponent.
- D. The Hittites were adept at siege warfare.
 1. Typically, they would first call on a fortified town or city to surrender, promising to spare both the populace and their property.
 2. If that offer was rejected, the Hittites would then blockade the town.
 3. For a quicker resolution, the Hittites would attempt to storm the town at vulnerable points or at times when vigilance was low.
 4. Finally, they could employ classic siege techniques and equipment.
- E. Information and intelligence gathering were as essential in ancient warfare as they are today. The Hittites had a highly organized system for gathering information about threats to local and imperial security.
- F. The Hittites took great care to secure those sectors of the empire that were vulnerable to attack.
- G. The Hittites treated their defeated enemies the same way other Near Eastern states did. Cities were generally looted, except for their temple precincts. Captured populations were deported, either in whole or in part.

Suggested Reading:

Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*.

———, *Life and Society in the Hittite World*.

Gurney, *The Hittites*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What were the greatest strengths of the Hittite army's structure and organization? Did those contribute to Hittite success? What were its greatest weaknesses?
2. How do the organization, equipment, and recruitment of the Hittite army compare to those of other Near Eastern armies of the same time period? To what extent might the Hittites have modeled their army on those of their neighbors? To what extent were they military innovators?

Lecture Ten

The Climax and Collapse of Hatti

Scope: The apogee of Hittite imperial power came during the last half of the 2nd millennium B.C., in the period known as the Hittite New Kingdom. One of the Club of the Great Powers that dominated the Near East during that time, Hatti jockeyed with Egypt and Mitanni for control of northern Syria and the region between the upper Tigris and Euphrates Mesopotamia. Hatti dominated but did not control all of Anatolia and had to deal with constant challenges to its authority in western Anatolia as well as dangerous attacks from the Gasga hill tribes that lived to the north of Hattusas. The cycle of rise and decline continued, often due to attacks by these enemies. Hatti reached the pinnacle of its imperial power under Suppiluliumas I in the mid-14th century. But its fortunes declined in the 13th century, and suddenly, at the very end of that century, Hatti disintegrated and vanished from the pages of history.

Outline

- I. Hatti reached the pinnacle of its power between about 1430 and 1200 B.C., during the period known as the New Kingdom.
 - A. Under the New Kingdom, Hatti was a member of the so-called Club of the Great Powers that dominated the Near East from the 15th to the 13th centuries.
 - B. Hatti's ascent to empire was the work of a series of talented and aggressive rulers. It began under Tudhaliyas II, who founded the New Kingdom during the final decades of the 1400s.
 1. Tudhaliyas came to power in a civil war that followed the murder of Muwatallis, the last of the ephemeral 15th-century kings.
 2. Tudhaliyas's relationship to previous Hittite rulers is unclear. Some scholars think that he may have founded an entirely new dynasty.
 - C. In Tudhaliyas's reign, the themes emerged that would dominate the rest of the history of the Hittite empire and the work of its rulers. In particular, we see Hatti threatened on all sides, every border insecure, its king and army fighting in all directions.
 - D. Despite Tudhaliyas's victories, Hatti's omnidirectional insecurity remained intractable. On all sides, his immediate successor, Arnuwanda I, faced hostile combinations of neighboring Great Powers, as well as attacks by marauders.
 1. Concerned by Hatti's resurgence, New Kingdom Egypt and Mitanni concluded an alliance soon after 1400 that fixed the boundary between their spheres of influence along a line in central Syria.
 2. At the same time, the Gasga once more burst forth from their mountain strongholds, sacking Hittite holy places in northern and central Anatolia and scattering the priests and attendants.
 - E. Not long after Arnuwanda's son and successor, Tudhaliyas III, came to the throne around 1370, the Hittite empire suffered a devastating invasion by multiple enemies.
 1. A later Hittite document says that the Gasga attacked from the north, Arzawa and Arawanna came in from the west, the kingdom of Azzi-Hayasa struck from the northeast, and the Isuwans attacked from the mountains of Armenia.
 2. The attackers first swept through the subject territories along the periphery and then struck the heartland itself, capturing and destroying Hattusas.
 3. The king and the royal court, along with the core of the army, escaped the catastrophe and were able to withdraw to a secure location.
 - F. The check to Hatti's power was brief, though. Phoenix-like, it rose from the ashes of its shattered capital to even greater glory.
 1. It is with this dramatic rebirth of Hittite power and authority that the New Kingdom was transformed into the Hittite empire.
 2. The account of Hatti's rise from the ashes is contained in the Hittite document called the Deeds of Suppiluliumas.
 3. Once he was king, Suppiluliumas I turned on Mitanni. Suppiluliumas's decision to invade Mitanni directly was triggered by Mitannian disruptions along the Hittite border.
 4. Following his humiliation of Mitanni, Suppiluliumas turned his attention to Syria, where he forced Mitanni's now-orphaned vassals to accept Hittite overlordship.
 5. The result of Suppiluliumas's bold stroke against Mitanni was a complete reshuffling of the balance of power in the northern Fertile Crescent and the establishment of Hatti as an imperial power of the first rank.

6. Unfortunately, the army appears to have brought back a plague from its raid on Syria. The plague killed Suppiluliumas. His son Arnuwanda II took the throne, but the plague killed him, too, probably after only a year in power.
- G. Following the death of Arnuwanda, his half-Kassite younger brother Mursilis II became king, around 1325. Like his predecessors, Mursilis spent his reign fighting in all directions. Luckily, military ability ran in his family, and he proved to be a vigorous and capable commander.
- H. Coming to the throne around 1290, Mursilis's successor, Muwatallis II, cemented the authority Mursilis had imposed on western Anatolia and defeated an Egyptian offensive in northern Syria, where he expanded Hittite control. But he had to battle all his reign against the Gasga.
- I. Shattering the rules established by Telepinus, dynastic civil war broke out following Muwatallis's death in the 1270s. This marks the beginning of Hatti's decline, because it weakened Hittite power both externally and domestically.
- J. The pressure on Hatti mounted during the reign of Tudhaliyas IV, who came to the throne around 1240.
 1. The Assyrians, under their new king Tikulti-Ninurta I, launched raids deep into Hatti's eastern territories, deporting thousands of Hittite subjects.
 2. In western Anatolia, Tudhaliyas was barely able to maintain the status quo.
 3. Tudhaliyas's only success was acquiring control over the island of Cyprus, perhaps in order to compensate for the loss of the Isuwan copper mines.
- II. The decline and fall of the Hittite empire remains one of the great mysteries of the Bronze Age.
 - A. It happened very suddenly during the last years of the 13th century and the first years of the 12th century. Exactly what happened is obscure.
 1. Tudhaliyas's eldest son, Arnuwanda III, reigned for only a couple of years around 1210. His second son, Suppiluliumas II, followed Arnuwanda to the throne, but no record survives of how long he reigned. He was the last known king of Hatti.
 2. Hattusas itself was destroyed violently and was never reoccupied.
 3. The viceroy at Carchemish survived and for a while kept up the pretense of being the continuator of Hatti, but he was never more than a local potentate and made no effort to regain control over Anatolia and the Hittite heartland.
 - B. We have a responsibility to pose and at least suggest an answer to two questions: Why did Hatti collapse so suddenly and completely, and who was responsible?
 1. The first point to be made is that Hatti was not a centralized state. It was a feudal conglomerate, and such conglomerates are inherently fragile.
 2. Second, as we have seen again and again, Hatti faced threats on all fronts, enemies that had nearly destroyed it before.
 3. But it was probably the Gasga who dealt Hatti's death blow.

Suggested Reading:

Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites*.

Gurney, *The Hittites*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why is Hittite history so characterized by cycles of rise and decline? What caused them, and what, if anything, might the Hittites have done to achieve greater stability?
2. Why were the Hittites never able to master the Gasga? What might have given the Gasga their advantage over the Hittites?
3. Why did the Hittites never appreciate the dangers that their failure to conquer all of Anatolia confronted them with, particularly the constant threat of a multifront war?

Lecture Eleven

The Rise of the Egyptian Empire

Scope: In the middle of the 2nd millennium B.C., Egypt emerged from the chaos of the Second Intermediate period energized as never before and entered the period of its history known as the New Kingdom (c. 1552–1069). It was under the New Kingdom that Egypt, for the first and only time in its history, expanded outside the secure geographical confines of the Nile Valley and conquered an extensive empire. The New Kingdom was the creation of the greatest of all Egyptian dynasties, Dynasty 18, an Upper Egyptian dynasty whose founder, the pharaoh Ahmose, drove the Hyksos from their strongholds in the Nile Delta and pushed them back into Canaan. Ahmose's successors, Amenhotep I and Thutmose I, turned their attentions to the south and began the conquest of Nubia. The greatest of all Dynasty 18 pharaohs, Thutmose III, rounded out Egypt's growing empire with the annexation of Canaan and southern Syria, defeating a coalition of native rulers at the great Battle of Megiddo.

Outline

- I. While the Hittites were building their empire in Anatolia, Egypt was also embarked on a career of conquest. To understand Egypt and the origins of its empire, it is important first to appreciate the defining role that geography played in the life of ancient Egypt, and second to familiarize ourselves with the sources for the history of Egypt's empire.
 - A. Egypt is the "gift of the Nile," in the words of Herodotus.
 1. He was referring to the inexhaustible fertility of the soil, which was the product of the river's annual floods, laying fresh layers of silt that made Egypt the richest place in the ancient world.
 2. Even the Egyptians' name for their country, the Kingdom of the Two Lands, reflects the defining role the river played.
 - B. Geography also provided early Egypt with a degree of security that other Near Eastern countries could only dream of.
 1. From most directions, Egypt was nearly inaccessible, surrounded either by deserts or the open sea.
 2. Egypt was only vulnerable along narrow and easily protected avenues of attack.
 3. These natural defenses meant that for much of its early history, Egypt was less troubled by war than the other societies of the ancient Near East were.
 - C. We have plentiful sources for Egyptian history, but they pose problems for discussing the New Kingdom, the era of Egypt's imperial glory. The main problem is that they don't say much about political, military, and administrative affairs.
 - D. Chronology also presents problems in studying imperial Egypt.
 1. Egyptian chronology is organized into three eras called the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms, which are separated from one another by "intermediate periods" of anarchy and are subdivided into a total of more than 30 numbered dynasties, extending from the unification of the Two Lands in the late 4th millennium down to the Roman period.
 2. The dates we apply to this chronology hinge on astronomical events, particularly the rising of the star Sirius, which was sacred to the Egyptians.
 3. Egyptologists disagree about the exact chronology of individual reigns.
 4. In the end, absolute chronological precision is not possible, and whatever dates we use have to be taken with a large dose of salt.
- II. Both the Egyptian empire and the New Kingdom were the creations of Dynasty 18, which lasted from 1550 to 1295 and has been called the greatest dynasty in Egypt's history.
 - A. There are two reasons why Egypt suddenly turned to empire, after being content for nearly 2,000 years to remain within the Nile Valley.
 1. The first is the fact that early in the Second Intermediate period (around 1650), for the first time in its history, a portion of Egypt was subjected to foreign rulers: the Hyksos.
 2. The second reason is the militarization of society that characterized late Dynasty 17 and early Dynasty 18.
 - B. The founder of the New Kingdom was Ahmose, who came to the throne in 1550. He took the first steps in conquering an empire by aggressively expanding Egyptian power beyond its traditional confines in the Nile Valley.
 - C. Ahmose's immediate successors continued his expansionist policies, with a particular emphasis on advancing into Nubia.

- III. After Thutmose I's death in 1492, there was a lull in the expansion of the empire under Thutmose II and his wife, Hatshepsut. Following Hatshepsut's death in 1458, their son Thutmose III assumed sole power and reigned until 1425. History remembers him as the greatest of all Egyptian conquerors. It was he who inaugurated the golden age of Egyptian imperial power.
- A. Throughout his adolescence, Thutmose III had prepared himself for a life of military command.
 - B. Thutmose III focused his energies on the Levant, and during his 33 years of sole rule he conducted no fewer than 17 campaigns there.
 - 1. His basic goal appears to have been to reestablish control over Canaan and to push Egyptian authority into central Syria.
 - 2. Thutmose's first Syrian campaign, in 1457, resulted in the Battle of Megiddo. He left us an account of Megiddo—history's first battle narrative.
 - 3. The consolidation of Egyptian authority in the southern Levant set the stage for Thutmose's crowning military achievement: In 1445, he led an Egyptian army across the Euphrates and into eastern Syria.
 - 4. Despite his impressive victories, Thutmose made no effort to impose tighter Egyptian control on the Levant. He contented himself with securing the submission of local rulers and left them in place.
 - 5. As a consequence of this relaxed imperial policy, and of agitation by Mitanni, Egyptian control in the Levant remained unstable.
- IV. Instability in Syria continued to trouble the early years of the reign of Thutmose III's successor, Amenhotep II, who reigned down to 1400.
- A. In contrast to Thutmose III, who was renowned for his brilliance as a strategist and tactician, Amenhotep II was famed for his sheer physical strength and skills as a warrior.
 - B. Amenhotep II's problems in Syria were caused once again by Mitannian efforts to destabilize Egyptian control. He had to campaign several times in an effort to cement Egyptian authority.
- V. By the end of Amenhotep II's reign, Egypt and Mitanni had fought each other to a standstill. Recognizing that fact, they negotiated a peace under Amenhotep II's successor, Thutmose IV, who ruled until 1390.
- A. The motivations for the peace were practical.
 - 1. Egypt was exhausted.
 - 2. Mitanni found itself threatened by the rise of Hatti under its vigorous king, Tudhaliyas II.
 - B. Thutmose IV's agreement with Mitanni kept the peace in Syria for 50 years.
 - C. We know of no major campaigning by Thutmose IV in Nubia, which suggests that Egypt's southern empire remained secure.
 - D. Thus, at the dawn of the 14th century, the Egyptian empire enjoyed peace and security, the gifts of the gods.

Suggested Reading:

Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt*.

Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. What role did psychological factors play in Egypt's sudden motivation to conquer an empire? How should historians approach issues such as psychology in trying to understand the actions of people and nations in the distant past?
- 2. Did different factors motivate Egyptian expansion into the Levant, versus the ones that motivated expansion into Nubia? What were those factors?

Lecture Twelve

The Imperial Army and Administration

Scope: The New Kingdom was a period of strongly centralized government, with power concentrated in the hands of a king whose warrior qualities were emphasized. The Egyptian homeland was administratively divided for the first time into Upper and Lower provinces, each under its own vizier. Egypt's traditional administrative districts, called nomes, provided local administration under nomarchs, whose main responsibilities were financial. Egypt's empire fell naturally into two parts: the Levant and Nubia. The way in which Egypt administered these two areas reflected their very diverse natures. Nubia was given a very close administration under a viceroy and was subdivided into two units, each under a deputy viceroy who oversaw several provinces, each in turn under a governor. The Levant had a looser administration with no viceroy, only several provinces whose governors dealt with local leaders. Led by a professional officer corps, the Egyptian army was organized into several divisions of infantry, named for the gods, but its elite force was its chariot corps.

Outline

- I. Just as the dawn of empire marked a break with the past in Egypt's spirit, so also did it mark a break with the past in its government and its army. Egypt's government was more tightly centralized under the New Kingdom than at any previous time in Egyptian history. The king was an absolute monarch, the supreme authority in every area of Egyptian politics and life.
 - A. As in most other Near Eastern empires, a royal ideology defined Egyptian beliefs about the king.
 1. He was Lord of the Two Lands.
 2. He was the lord of justice, the font of all laws, and the foundation of righteousness, subject only to the authority of *ma'at*, the principle of cosmic harmony laid down by the creator god at the beginning of the universe.
 3. He was Egypt's chief priest, the link between the divine and human realms, the guarantor of order in the face of chaos.
 4. He was all-knowing, able to peer into the deepest recesses of other men's thoughts.
 5. He was all-wise, a ruler in whom the people could place their unquestioning trust.
 - B. Perhaps the most misunderstood element of Egyptian royal ideology is the king's relationship to the gods. That relationship was a lot more nuanced than most people think.
 1. Like the Sumerians, Egyptians believed that kingship was derived from the realm of the gods, a central part of the divinely decreed structure of the world.
 2. But scholars no longer think that the king himself was believed to be divine.
 - C. Of course, the most important single element in the royal ideology was the king as a warrior.
 1. His mastery of the weapons of war was particularly emphasized.
 2. The image of the victorious king punishing Egypt's enemies was hammered home at every opportunity.
- II. The king ruled Egypt and its empire through an intricate administrative apparatus.
 - A. Under the New Kingdom, Egypt itself was for the first time divided administratively into Upper and Lower regions, each with its own vizier.
 - B. Upper and Lower Egypt were subdivided into administrative districts called nomes.
 - C. Thanks to the Nile's annual floods, Egypt produced dependable agricultural surpluses, which were the royal government's main source of revenue.
 - D. Agricultural revenues were funneled into the royal treasury, which was in essence a granary.
 - E. Revenues were administered by two overseers of the treasury, one each for Upper and Lower Egypt.
- III. Outside Egypt proper, the territories of the empire were divided into two large circumscriptions: Nubia and the Levant. The form of administration applied in each of these areas differed dramatically.
 - A. In Nubia, Egypt imposed a complex and hierarchical direct administration under a viceroy.
 1. The viceroy bore the title King's Son of Kush and Overseer of the Southern Lands.
 2. The vicerealty consisted of two units—Upper Nubia and Lower Nubia.
 3. Local administration within the provinces was handled by mayors and chieftains.
 4. For the most part, the Egyptians used Nubia for resource extraction.
 - B. In the Levant, Egypt governed its possessions far more loosely.
 1. There was no viceroy. Territories were divided directly into provinces under governors called overseers of the northern foreign lands.

2. To assist the governors, the Egyptians planted garrisons throughout the Levant.
3. Local authority remained in the hands of vassal rulers, whose main tasks were to keep order in their communities and to ensure a smooth flow of tribute to the royal treasury.

IV. The army of New Kingdom Egypt was central both to imperial expansion and to imperial defense.

- A. The New Kingdom army differed sharply from the armies of the Old and Middle Kingdoms.
 1. The Old and Middle Kingdom armies seem to have resembled feudal levies more than a professional military organization.
 2. The army of the New Kingdom, on the other hand, was a carefully thought-out institution, with a regular rank hierarchy and a systematic organization that was probably forged in the wars of national liberation against the Hyksos.
- B. There were two combat branches in the army of the New Kingdom: the infantry and the chariotry.
 1. As in other Near Eastern armies, the infantry was divided into heavy and light infantry, distinguished by their weaponry.
 2. Like other Near Eastern infantry, Egyptian infantry seems to have been lightly protected.
 3. The units and subunits of the infantry were based on a modified decimal system and were not unlike the subunits of modern armies.
 4. Officer rank structure corresponded to the organizational scheme.
- C. Chariots were introduced into Egyptian armies at the beginning of the New Kingdom.
 1. Being associated with the liberation of Egypt from the Hyksos, the new chariot contingents created after the Second Intermediate period formed the most prestigious and influential section of the army.
 2. As in other Near Eastern armies, the Egyptians used the two-wheeled chariot essentially as a mobile platform for archers.
 3. Like infantry units, chariot units were organized on the decimal principle.
- D. The first we hear of mounted troops—cavalry—is in the middle of Dynasty 18. They were mainly employed as military auxiliaries.
- E. As to siege warfare, it seems to have been something the Egyptian army rarely used.
- F. As with all imperial armies, the army of New Kingdom Egypt struggled with the problem of finding enough recruits to meet its manpower needs.
- G. The tactical formations used by the Egyptian army were very much like those of other Near Eastern armies.
 1. They emphasized depth and mass.
 2. The dense infantry formations and the use of chariots dictated that generals choose their battlefields carefully.
- H. Egypt's navy also expanded in response to the demands of defending the empire.

Suggested Reading:

Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt*.

Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How did the native society of Egypt's imperial possessions in the Levant differ from that of its possessions in Nubia, and what role might those differences have played in the very different forms of administration that Egypt used to govern the two areas?
2. What were the organizational and tactical strengths and weaknesses of Egypt's army? How might Egypt have made its army more effective?

Lecture Thirteen

The End of the Egyptian Empire

Scope: Egypt's imperial fortunes began to wane following the reign of Thutmose III. After the mid-14th century B.C., Egypt faced a new and dangerous rival in the Levant in the form of Hatti, the empire of the Hittites. Botched efforts at a marriage alliance after the death of Tutankhamun resulted in the Hittites temporarily driving the Egyptians from most of the Levant. Under Dynasty 19, multiple threats gathered on Egypt's imperial horizons. Hatti continued to challenge Egypt in the Levant, while for the first time the desert peoples who lived west of Egypt attacked the Nile Delta. Even aggressive leadership from capable pharaohs such as Sety I and the famous Ramesses II could only hold the line against Egypt's enemies, not eliminate them. Finally, under Dynasty 20, the dam broke: Egypt was driven from the Levant and retreated from Nubia. Soon afterward, even Egypt's internal unity dissolved, not to be restored until centuries later.

Outline

- I. After the dazzling reign of Thutmose III, the Egyptian empire faced little more than nuisance raids from nomads during the famous Amarna period in the first half of the 14th century B.C. But as Dynasty 18 drew to a close, that would soon change.
 - A. In the mid-14th century, the peace with Mitanni on the Syrian frontier died when Mitanni collapsed.
 1. Intervening in a Mitannian civil war, the great Hittite conqueror Suppiluliumas sacked Mitanni's capital and turned the Hurrian kingdom into a vassal of Hatti.
 2. Next, he subjugated Mitanni's former vassals in northern Syria and imposed direct Hittite control on the region.
 3. Amenhotep IV, or Akhenaten, seems to have been more interested in his radical reform of Egyptian religion than he was in governing the empire.
 4. With Mitanni gone and Egypt now sharing a border with Hatti, Akhenaten and Suppiluliumas tried to avoid conflict by drawing up a treaty regularizing relations between the two empires and defining the border between them in the Levant, basically along the lines of the old border with Mitanni.
 5. But diplomacy failed to head off trouble between the two empires, especially since their imperial clients now saw an opportunity to play them against one another.
 - B. Akhenaten was succeeded in 1336 by his son, the famous Tutankhamun, who was nine years old. When Tutankhamun died in his late teens, his young widow wrote to Suppiluliumas and asked him to send a Hittite prince to be her next husband.
 1. This held out the dazzling prospect of a merger of the two kingdoms, and, no doubt unable to believe his luck, Suppiluliumas happily dispatched the next-to-the-youngest of his five sons, Zannanza, in response to her request.
 2. Zannanza was murdered before he got to Egypt, probably at the instigation of the army high command.
 - C. Zannanza's murder led to war between the Hittite and Egyptian empires. The Egyptian army seized power, and a series of generals was placed on the throne, but even they were unable to reverse the decline in Egypt's fortunes.
- II. The shadows lengthened under the early pharaohs of Dynasty 19, founded by the aged general Ramesses I in 1295. For the first time, Egypt found itself threatened from all directions.
 - A. But there was still a lot of vigor left in Egypt. Ramesses I's son Sety I responded aggressively to the erosion of Egyptian authority in the Levant.
 - B. Sety also had other problems on his horizon. In an ominous sign that the previously empty Sahara was no longer secure, Egypt was attacked for the first time from the west, by Libyan tribesmen.
- III. Egypt's last great pharaoh was Sety's son and successor, the famous Ramesses II, who came to the throne in 1279 and ruled no less than 63 years. Ramesses had to fight hard to maintain the empire against the forces gathering against it.
 - A. In 1278, Ramesses second year on the throne, Egypt faced its first attack from the so-called Sea Peoples.
 1. Sea Peoples is the collective name the Egyptians applied to the waves of marauders who attacked Egypt under Dynasties 19 and 20.
 2. The attack of 1278 was the first in what would be a series of increasingly powerful and devastating raids by the Sea Peoples, spanning more than a century. They would ultimately sweep through the entire eastern Mediterranean, destroying everything that lay in their path.
 - B. Ramesses II's most famous exploit was the campaign that led to the great Battle of Kadesh in 1274, pitting him and the full force of the imperial Egyptian army against the field army of Hatti, commanded in person by King Muwatallis.

1. The war was sparked by yet another problem with the Syrian border vassals, who were treaty shopping between empires for better deals.
 2. In late April, Ramesses set out from Egypt, bringing with him about 20,000 men and a large force of chariots.
 3. Despite the uncertainties that swirl around numbers and deployments, the course of the battle is clear enough. Muwatallis's plan came very close to succeeding.
 4. The difference between disaster and survival for the Egyptian army was Ramesses II's heroic personal leadership. Maybe this is why he was so proud of the battle.
 5. The Battle of Kadesh was a tactical draw for Ramesses, but overall it was a strategic defeat.
- C. The consequences of the defeat at Kadesh were catastrophic. Egyptian control over the Levant swiftly disintegrated.
1. As Ramesses' army withdrew south to lick its wounds, all of Canaan erupted in revolt.
 2. But in Egypt's crisis, Ramesses showed the same dogged courage he had displayed at Kadesh. Beginning in 1271, he led a series of counteroffensives to win back control over the Levant.
 3. Kadesh turned out to be the high-water mark of Hittite power in the Levant. Hatti began to go into decline afterward, and Ramesses capitalized on Hittite weakness.
 4. But as the power of Assyria grew and began to threaten the authority of both Hatti and Egypt in the Levant, peace was in both sides' interests, so in 1258 Hattusilis III proposed a formal peace treaty, which Ramesses accepted.
- D. Although Ramesses II had secured peace in Syria, his successor, Merneptah, was unable to enjoy its benefits.
1. He had to put down rebellions both in Nubia and in the Levant.
 2. In 1207, an army of marauding Sea Peoples attacked Egypt from the west.
 3. When Merneptah died in 1203, Dynasty 19 came to a chaotic end. Four pharaohs and a queen rose and fell from power over the next 20 years.
- E. Ramesses III, of Dynasty 20, restored stability. The last vigorous ruler of the New Kingdom, he patterned his rule on that of Ramesses II. Under him, the threats Egypt faced were more dire than a century earlier, and its resources were far fewer. This spelled the death of the empire.
1. The Libyans launched another major attack on the Nile Delta in 1179.
 2. While the Libyans attacked Egypt from the west, in 1176 the Sea Peoples launched their last and greatest attack on Egypt from the east.
- F. In the 84 years following the death of Ramesses III, eight pharaohs, all named Ramesses, occupied the throne. By the time Dynasty 20 came to an end in 1069, the Egyptian empire had disappeared.
- G. From the heights of imperial power, Egypt had fallen to impotence and anarchy in the space of barely a century. Why?
1. First, Egypt could not cope with threats on all sides.
 2. The dynastic troubles at the end of Dynasty 19 also weakened Egypt.
 3. Finally, the repeated onslaughts of the Sea Peoples, spread across a generation from 1207 to 1173, destroyed the political and diplomatic structure of the Levant, and with it the equilibrium of the area.

Suggested Reading:

Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt*.

Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What role did internal factors play in the collapse of Egypt's empire? What role did external factors play? Which was more important, and why?
2. What might Egypt have done to prevent the collapse of its empire?
3. Did having to fight on multiple fronts undermine Egypt's ability to defend its empire?

Lecture Fourteen

The Minoan Thalassocracy

Scope: The first civilization to appear in the Mediterranean was the civilization that we call Minoan, which emerged on Crete during the 3rd millennium B.C. Because we have not deciphered the Minoans' language, everything we know about them comes either from excavating their sites or from legends written down 15 centuries later by the Greeks. By about the year 2000, large, complex structures had appeared; excavators call these palaces. The so-called Palatial period was the zenith of Minoan civilization and lasted until about 1450. According to Greek authors, it was during this period that the Minoans built for themselves the first thalassocracy, or sea empire. Archeology confirms a Minoan presence on the islands of the Aegean and hints at one in southern Italy and Sicily, but we know no details, not even the names of any Minoan rulers, much less how the thalassocracy was organized. Around 1450, Minoan Crete was conquered by invaders, who we know to have been Greeks.

Outline

- I.** During the Bronze Age, an enigmatic but groundbreaking civilization, which we call the Minoan, came into being on the island of Crete.
 - A.** The term “Minoan” is actually modern. It was coined by the first archeologist to explore Crete, Sir Arthur Evans, who began his excavations in 1900.
 - B.** The Minoans are important for three reasons.
 1. They created the first civilization to emerge in Europe or the Mediterranean.
 2. They are said to have created the first sea-based empire, or thalassocracy.
 3. They exerted a profound influence on the emergence of civilization among the Greeks of the mainland.
 - C.** The Minoans' identity is one of the ancient world's many great mysteries.
 1. Their language cannot be identified, because it is not part of any identifiable language family.
 2. What is abundantly clear is that the Minoans were not Greeks.
 - D.** The details of the Minoans' history are obscure. The Minoans left behind no literature, even though they were literate.
 1. We have to piece together our picture of the Minoans' culture and history from other sources. Those sources are the material remains of their civilization, together with the garbled and embroidered memories of their successors, the Greeks.
 2. Having to piece together our understanding from legend and archeology also means that the subjective impressions of scholars play a big role in evaluating the Minoans and their world.
 - E.** Geographically, Crete occupies a strategic location between the Near East and Europe. Its geography and geology played important roles in shaping Crete's history.
- II.** The Minoan era lasted 2,000 years (c. 3500–c. 1450). For the sake of convenience, archeologists separate the long chronology of the Minoan era into a variety of lesser periods.
 - A.** Evans divided Minoan civilization into three eras—early, middle, and late Minoan—based on the styles of the pottery he uncovered.
 - B.** Put off by this descent into arcane complexity, recent scholars tend to prefer a simpler division, into pre-Palatial, Palatial, and post-Palatial, feeling that it better reflects cultural developments.
 - C.** Chronology poses particular challenges. Until recently, the chronology of Minoan Crete has depended primarily on associations with Egyptian chronology.
- III.** Human settlement of Crete seems to have taken place in several waves, beginning in the Neolithic period.
 - A.** The earliest permanent settlers arrived from southwestern Anatolia circa the year 6000. This colonization may have occurred via Rhodes.
 - B.** The evidence suggests that a new wave of settlers came to eastern Crete from Anatolia around 3000, also colonizing the smaller Aegean islands. These settlers fused with the earlier inhabitants to lay the foundations of Minoan civilization. They developed a strong commercial culture.
 - C.** The Bronze Age began on Crete circa 2500. The Minoans were trading with Egypt, and advances in agriculture were accompanied by the appearance of distinctive new artifacts.

- IV. Minoan civilization and Minoan power reached their heights during the Palatial period, between about 2000 and about 1450. The Palatial period is further divided into the proto-Palatial and the neo-Palatial periods, with the dividing line in the mid- to late 17th century.
- A. The Palatial period takes its name from the large and elaborate palace-like structures that dominated Crete during much of the 2nd millennium.
 - B. The evidence suggests that some sort of centralized political authority emerged on Crete during the Palatial period.
 - C. The economic organization of Minoan Crete during the Palatial period probably resembled that of the monarchies we are familiar with in the Near East from this same time.
 - 1. We think that during the Palatial period, Crete had a centralized, redistributive, collective economy.
 - 2. The existence of a centralized redistributive economy would help to explain the rise of the palaces.
 - 3. Production activity would also have been centralized in the palaces.
 - 4. The centralized, redistributive economy also demanded elaborate record keeping, and this then led to the emergence of two writing systems: a pictographic script and the syllabary script called Linear A.
 - D. The transition from the proto-Palatial period to the neo-Palatial period, in the mid- to late 17th century, is marked by an episode of destruction at the great palaces.
 - E. Following this episode of destruction, the Minoans rebuilt. The new palaces retained the same functions as their predecessors but exhibited new features.
 - F. Commerce played a major role in life during the Palatial period. In the first half of the 2nd millennium, Crete stood at the center of a far-flung trade network.
- V. The end of Minoan Crete came in the mid-15th century, when another wave of destruction swept across the island.
- A. Textual evidence proves that the creators of this wave of destruction were Greek invaders from the mainland, who seized control of Knossos and eliminated the main Minoan centers, both on the island and throughout the Aegean.
 - B. With the Greek conquest of the island, Crete transitioned from the Minoan period into the Mycenaean, which later shared the Minoans' fate: Mycenaean civilization disintegrated circa 1200.
- VI. So now we must ask the big question: Was there a Minoan sea empire, or thalassocracy?
- A. The idea that the Minoans created a thalassocracy in the Aegean derives from traditions passed on by Greek historians like Thucydides and Herodotus.
 - B. Scholarly opinion on the question of the Minoan thalassocracy is very divided.
 - 1. Some scholars flatly dismiss the existence of any Minoan sea empire.
 - 2. Other scholars are less hostile and try to distill useful historical information from the accounts of the Greek historians, in combination with archeological discoveries.
 - C. On balance, the existence of some sort of Minoan thalassocracy cannot be proven, but perhaps it seems more likely than not.
- VII. The fall of the Minoan thalassocracy is as obscure as everything else about the Minoans.
- A. All that we know for certain is that Greeks from the mainland replaced native Minoans in control in the palaces of Crete in the middle of the 15th century.
 - B. If the Minoans had command of the sea, it is hard to imagine how the Greeks could have mounted a successful invasion and conquest of Crete.

Suggested Reading:

Castleden, *Minoans*.

Dickinson, *The Aegean Bronze Age*.

Nardo, *The Minoans*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How would civilization have come to Crete in the mid-3rd millennium? With whom might the Cretans have been in contact?
2. If Crete did in fact rule over a sea empire in the early 2nd millennium, does the creation and possession of such an empire make it more likely or less likely that Crete had a single ruler, rather than being divided up into separate palace-states?
3. If the Minoans ruled the waves, what do you think the likeliest explanation is for how the Greeks were able to conquer Crete?

Lecture Fifteen

Mycenae and the Dawn of Greece

Scope: Early in the 2nd millennium B.C., a wave of destruction swept over the southernmost peninsula of the Balkans, heralding the arrival of a new people: the Greeks. By about 1600, their leaders had begun to build large palaces for themselves at a number of easily defended sites in southern and central Greece and burying their dead in deep shaft graves with rich troves of grave goods. Around 1500, the palace elites began interring their dead in large, beehive-shaped *tholos* tombs. These have mostly been plundered, but the evidence suggests that the dynasties that built them were made up of merchant princes, who derived their wealth from far-flung trade networks. There is nothing to indicate that Greece was a centralized monarchy, but some centers were especially wealthy and large. Chief of them was Mycenae.

Outline

- I. Bronze Age Greece is also known as Mycenaean Greece. We'll begin our exploration of Mycenaean Greece by looking at the role of geography in shaping Greek life and at the sources we have on which to base its story.
 - A. Greece is a rugged place, where land and sea are in intimate contact. The rugged geography of Greece fragmented Greece politically.
 - B. For sources on Bronze Age Greece, we can draw on several basic types of information.
 1. The first is the group of legends that later Greeks preserved about the Bronze Age.
 2. Widespread archeological investigation has laid bare the culture of Bronze Age Greece and has enabled us to establish a rough chronology for the physical remains of the Mycenaean world.
 3. Archeology has provided us with our third type of information as well: archives.
 4. What all this means is that when we set out to tell the story of Bronze Age Greece, we wind up telling a story with a lot of gaps, a story lacking the details that make a story vivid and personal, like names.
 - C. The migration of the Greeks was a branch of the great Indo-European migrations that swept across central Asia and Europe during the Bronze Age.
 - D. Both the archeological evidence and Greek legend agree on the outlines of the final Greek movement into Greece itself.
 1. The legends preserved by the poet Hesiod in the 8th century B.C. tell of the ancestors of the Greeks invading from the north.
 2. Archeologically, the arrival of the Greeks is indicated by a wave of destruction at native, or Pelasgian, sites, followed by telltale cultural changes.
- II. Both later legend and modern archeology agree that the most important site in all of Bronze Age Greece was Mycenae, perched above the plain of Argos in the northeastern Peloponnese. It had arisen by circa 1600.
 - A. Mycenae sits in a very strategic location. It is at the southern end of the Isthmus of Corinth, where it overlooks communications between the Peloponnese and central Greece.
 - B. Our knowledge of the earliest phase of Bronze Age Greek civilization is entirely archeological and is dominated by the spectacular evidence from Mycenae itself.
 1. Excavators have found two large grave circles at Mycenae that date to the period between circa 1550 and circa 1450. These were evidently the burial places of the dynasties that ruled from the palace there.
 2. The material from the grave circles suggests that the princely culture of Mycenae was a mix of indigenous and Minoan elements.
 3. The extent of the Grave Circle dynasties' political power is, of course, a matter of speculation. From their astonishing wealth, it is reasonable to assume that they ruled over what was at least a regional barony.
 - C. The Grave Circle dynasties at Mycenae were followed by the so-called Tholos Tomb dynasty, which ruled from about 1450 to 1350.
 1. *Tholos* tombs were used as dynastic burial chambers. They look like igloos in shape, but are much bigger (and less cold); the largest ones are among the most visually impressive remains from Bronze Age Greece.
 2. The Tholos Tomb dynasty resembled the Grave Circle dynasties in its power and commercial activity.
 - D. The evidence points to the Mycenaeans developing a dominant position in Aegean commercial networks from around the time of the Grave Circle B dynasty, circa 1600 onward.
- III. Politically speaking, there is no evidence that Mycenaean Greece ever had a centralized government.
 - A. It seems to have been divided up into several dozen baronies ruled by local princes, mostly concentrated in central and southern Greece.

- B. The prince of Mycenae may have functioned as a sort of high king, a titular leader of the Greeks, but without any effective authority over them.
- C. Although we lack information about the political structure of Bronze Age Greece as a whole, we have good information about the structure of the government of a Mycenaean principality, thanks to a trove of Linear B texts recovered from Pylos, in the southwestern Peloponnese. The picture that emerges is of a surprisingly bureaucratic form of government.
 - 1. The ruler of the principality bore the title *wanax*, which we render as “king.” The king controlled immense productive resources.
 - 2. The nobility played important roles in the government of the principality. They are attested to both as military commanders and as officials at the royal court.
 - 3. The king was assisted by a substantial royal administration.

IV. The Mycenaeans were a warlike people, both on land and sea.

- A. Our knowledge of Mycenaean warships comes almost exclusively from Mycenaean art. No remains of a Mycenaean ship have yet been recovered.
- B. We’re relatively well informed about Mycenaean land warfare, based not only on artistic depictions but also on archeological data, supplemented by the Linear B archives.
 - 1. The texts show that the armies of the Mycenaean princes were made up of the types of troops common to other Bronze Age armies: heavy infantry, light infantry, and chariot troops.
 - 2. Mycenaean soldiers employed a variety of weapons, which changed over time, especially after the middle of the 14th century.
 - 3. The tactics employed by Greek armies are familiar ones, except for the chariotry, which was used in flanking maneuvers or to transport princes into battle.

Suggested Reading:

Chadwick, *The Mycenaean World*.

Dickinson, *The Aegean Bronze Age*.

Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age*.

Wood, *In Search of the Trojan War*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. What spurred the Greeks to the creation of the palace-centered civilization of this period? Was it contact with Minoan Crete? Does early Mycenaean culture show Minoan influences?
- 2. How would the merchant princes of Greece in the mid-2nd millennium have been able to build their trade networks if a Minoan thalassocracy controlled the Aegean and the adjacent waters?

Lecture Sixteen

The Collapse of the Mycenaean World

Scope: The archeological evidence shows that Mycenaean Greece reached its zenith during the century after the Greek takeover of Crete. This was the heyday of the merchant princes, and finds of Mycenaean trade goods around the Mediterranean point to the existence of a trade network as extensive as the Minoans'. Then, after 1350 B.C., trouble appeared. Later legends remember conflicts between the palaces (such as a Peloponnesian expedition against Thebes) and political turmoil within the palaces (with numerous dynasties being replaced during the 13th century). Hittite texts speak of increasing troubles in western Anatolia associated with the Greeks and of the marauding Sea Peoples of the Aegean beginning to trouble Egypt. Most tellingly, the palaces receive massive fortifications, becoming citadels. Then, in the late 13th and early 12th centuries, around the time of the siege of Troy, Mycenaean civilization collapsed, violently. The citadels were destroyed, sometimes more than once, and by 1150 were abandoned altogether. Greece entered a long dark age.

Outline

- I. Mycenaean Greece reached the apogee of its power in the middle of the 2nd millennium B.C.
 - A. The late 15th and early 14th centuries witnessed a flowering of Mycenaean culture and influence.
 1. From their luxurious palaces, the merchant princes presided over a trade network that stretched throughout the Mediterranean and even beyond.
 2. The Mycenaeans also established colonies far afield from mainland Greece.
 3. Around the end of the 15th century, the Hittites began to take notice of the Greeks. Their texts refer to a land called Ahhiyava, which recalls the term Akhaian, a term that Homer uses to mean "Greek."
 4. By the early 13th century, the high king of Ahhiyava is described as equal not only to the Hittite king but also to the kings of Babylonia, Assyria, and Egypt, which would seem to make Ahhiyava a member of the Club of the Great Powers.
 - B. But already, during the last half of the 14th century, signs of trouble had begun to appear.
 1. The most dramatic evidence of rising levels of insecurity is the discovery of massively fortified citadels replacing many of the old, unwall palaces.
 2. Classical legend remembers this as a time of political turmoil in Greece.
 3. As new dynasties were replacing old ones and the palaces were being replaced by citadels, the Mycenaean trade empire seems to have been shrinking.
 - C. Neither the legends nor our documentary sources identify the source of this increasing insecurity, and it is not the sort of question that archeology can address, but clearly some danger had begun to loom over the Mycenaean world.
 - D. Perhaps what the changes that took place during the 14th century indicate is a major cultural shift in Greece: the rise of a heroic culture.
 1. I would suggest that what happened was that the old dynasties of merchant princes were ousted by new dynasties of warrior heroes.
 2. If so, then this marked a sea change in the life of Bronze Age Greece, because the cultural values of a heroic society are radically different from those of a merchant society.
- II. Insecurity continued to mount during the early 13th century. The evidence indicates that the heroic violence began to spread outward from Greece to the shores of Anatolia and beyond.
 - A. Already slowing during the late 14th century, Mycenaean commerce seems to have broken down completely during the middle of the 13th. Exports of pottery from Greece cease soon after about 1230.
 - B. The evidence indicates that after the middle of the 13th century, the Greeks were assisting anti-Hittite elements in western Anatolia and participating in raids throughout the eastern Mediterranean, as far as Egypt.
- III. Between circa 1200 and circa 1180, Mycenaean civilization collapsed, abruptly and violently, obliterated in the massive wave of destruction that swept away the empires of the late Bronze Age.
 - A. As is always the case in the violent collapse of civilizations, the evidence is fragmentary and incoherent. It consists mainly of the legends recorded much later by classical Greek authors and the overwhelming archeological evidence of massive, widespread destruction.
 - B. Later Greek legends attributed the collapse of the Mycenaean world to an invasion by a Greek tribe called the Dorians.
 1. In Classical times, the Dorians were Greeks who spoke their own dialect of Greek and who had unique social institutions, but the origins of the Dorians are unclear.

2. According to later legend, the Dorians were led into Greece from the north by the Herakleidae.
3. Unfortunately, the only evidence for this Dorian invasion is the legends themselves.
- C. The archeological evidence graphically reveals the multiple waves of destruction that rolled over the Mycenaean world around and shortly after 1200 and enables us to sketch out the fates that befell the individual citadels.
 1. The earliest evidence for destruction comes from central Greece.
 2. The palace at Pylos was destroyed around 1200. The threat was sudden and lethal; it is tersely recorded in the Linear B archives found in the burned remains of the palace.
 3. We have no Linear B tablets to narrate the fall of the citadels at Mycenae, at Tiryns, and throughout the Argolid. All we have is destruction. Literally every site in the Argolid was destroyed.
 4. In Laconia in the eastern Peloponnese, the Menelaion (the palace at Sparta) was destroyed circa 1190 and was not reoccupied until the 8th century.
 5. The Mycenaean settlements on the islands of the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean were also destroyed.
 6. According to later tradition, the citadel at Athens was the only one in all of Mycenaean Greece to withstand the tide of destruction, but because it lies beneath the Classical buildings on top of the Acropolis, we have very little evidence for its history.
- IV. Given the nature of our sources, the causes of the collapse of Mycenaean civilization are bound to be unclear, but it seems likely that they are to be sought within the Mycenaean world itself, rather than outside.
 - A. The underlying cause of the collapse was likely the destabilization of society growing out of the Mycenaean world's own culture.
 - B. The immediate cause of the collapse of Mycenaean civilization may well have been the Trojan War, which probably occurred between circa 1250 and circa 1230. Later Greek memory recalled the Trojan War as the beginning of the end, the event that brought on the collapse of the age of heroes. This actually makes sense.
 1. The scale of the effort was immense.
 2. The war lasted many years—10, according to later tradition.
 3. It exhausted the political and economic strength of the Mycenaean world.
- V. The collapse of Mycenaean civilization may have been what triggered the violent end of the eastern Mediterranean Bronze Age.
 - A. Waves of displaced Mycenaean warriors poured out of the devastated centers of the Aegean, doing the only thing they knew how to do: pillage. As the wave of marauders pushed on, it swept up more and more people, themselves displaced by the violence.
 - B. There can be little doubt that the displacement of the Mycenaean is closely linked with the eruption of the Sea Peoples.
 - C. The Mycenaean's last appearance in history was as the Philistines.

Suggested Reading:

Chadwick, *The Mycenaean World*.

Dickinson, *The Aegean Bronze Age*.

Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age*.

Wood, *In Search of the Trojan War*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What effect did the fall of Minoan Crete have on the development of Mycenaean Greece? To what extent were the Mycenaeans a continuation of the Minoan thalassocracy, and to what extent did they move in a direction of their own?
2. Do you find the attribution of the rise of insecurity in the Mycenaean world after 1350 to changes in Mycenaean culture to be a persuasive one? Why or why not? What other explanation might be offered?
3. Most scholars dismiss the historicity of the Trojan War, and even fewer are willing to consider the possibility that it played a role in the collapse of the Mycenaean world. Why then would the Greeks have remembered it as being a defining event in their past history? Do you find the interpretation given here of the role played by the war to be persuasive? Why or why not?

Lecture Seventeen

The Birth of Israel

Scope: Despite its brief existence, the empire of David and Solomon had a profound impact on history because of its role in shaping the religious history of the Abrahamic faiths. The accounts preserved in the Hebrew Bible, when used in conjunction with archeological evidence, enable us to reconstruct the history of Israel and their realm. The roots of the empire of Israel lie in the upheavals that brought an end to the Bronze Age in the eastern Mediterranean. The story of the Exodus must be seen in the context of the devastating migrations at the end of the Bronze Age, movements that destroyed the Hittite, Egyptian, and Assyrian empires and created a power vacuum that made possible Israel's settlement in the hill country of Canaan, as well as the emergence of David and Solomon's empire. But it was Saul who first consolidated Israel's scattered tribes into a kingdom, to defend them against pressure from the Philistines settled along the coast.

Outline

- I.** Like the city-state of Athens, the kingdom of Israel, the realm of David and Solomon, had an influence on the development of Western civilization out of all proportion to its size.
 - A.** Whereas Athens's importance lies in its role in shaping Western philosophy and in giving birth to democracy, drama, and the study of history, Israel's importance lies in the impact it had on Western religion, an impact vastly greater than that of any other people, ancient or modern, great or humble.
 - B.** Few people today realize how insignificant Israel's role was in the political history of the ancient world.
 - C.** Our sources for Israel's history are significantly different from our sources for most of the other kingdoms and empires of the ancient Near East.
 - 1.** Archeological excavation has been more intensive in Israel than in any other part of the ancient world, but although it has revealed much of the history of the region, it has failed to uncover any documentary material from the United Monarchy.
 - 2.** On the other hand, thanks to the fact that Israel's religious legacy was so profoundly important, we have in the Hebrew Bible an immense corpus of narrative literary material on the origins and history of David and Solomon's empire.
- II.** The roots of the kingdom of Israel lie in the upheavals of the late 2nd millennium B.C.
 - A.** Before 1200, Canaan, like the rest of the Levant, was part of the Egyptian empire.
 - B.** But by circa 1000, the Egyptian empire in the Levant had vanished, and the political structure of Canaan had changed radically.
 - 1.** The coastal sites in the south had been taken over by the Philistines, who were probably settled there by Egypt to block the coastal route from the Levant into the Egyptian heartland.
 - 2.** In the interior, the city-states had vanished and their place had been taken by the kingdom of Israel.
 - 3.** The traditions preserved in the Hebrew scriptures associate these changes with the arrival, conquest, and settlement of the Israelites in Canaan and the surrounding areas.
- III.** The biblical and archeological evidence for the Exodus and Israel's settlement of Canaan are riddled with difficulties.
 - A.** The conquest and settlement of Canaan are the final acts in the drama that gave birth to Israel's identity: the Exodus. But as it stands, the account of the Exodus in the Bible presents problems of chronology and scale.
 - B.** In addition to the difficulties that attend the biblical details of the Exodus, the narrative accounts of Israel's conquest of Canaan are also difficult to reconcile—both with one another and with the archeological evidence.
 - C.** Different schools of thought have developed among scholars as they grapple with the challenges that the biblical and archeological evidence pose for our understanding of the Israelite settlement of Canaan. None of them has won wide acceptance.
 - 1.** A traditionalist group, sometimes called the biblical archeology school, tries to harmonize the biblical account with the archeological record.
 - 2.** Other scholars have suggested that the Israelites were social revolutionaries who originated within Canaan itself.
 - 3.** If there is a majority opinion among scholars, it is that Israel comprised a group of seminomadic clans that infiltrated the Canaan hill country from east of the Jordan and eventually seized control of the urban communities in the valleys and coastal areas.
 - D.** Despite the disagreements over what actually took place in the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan, a few points stand out both from the narrative and the archeological evidence.

1. We can say that later Israelites firmly believed that they had entered Canaan from the outside and conquered it, and that belief was central to their sense of identity and the development of their religion.
 2. It is clear from the archeological evidence that the city-state culture of Canaan underwent a fundamental change around 1200 and that many of the Canaanite cities had become part of Israel by 200 years later.
 3. It is also clear that circa 1050 there was a dramatic increase in village settlement in the Canaanite hill country by a people who were experienced farmers and who were familiar with Canaanite material culture.
- IV. For the first century and a half after their appearance in Canaan, the Israelites lived a simple life off the beaten track as a group of autonomous hill clans. When monarchy finally emerged among them, it was in response to external threats.
- A. According to biblical tradition, postsettlement Israel had a very decentralized political structure, the so-called Judges.
 - B. The background to the emergence of monarchy among the Israelites lies in events familiar to us from Egyptian history.
 1. Around 1176, Ramesses III defeated a large force of Sea Peoples who had attacked the eastern Nile Delta from the direction of southern Palestine. Prominent among these marauders were the Peleset, or Philistines.
 2. Ramesses appears to have settled the defeated Philistines in the coastal lands of southern Canaan, where they could serve as a barrier to further attacks on Egypt.
 3. After they consolidated their control over the coastal region, the Philistines gradually began to expand inland, which brought them into conflict with the Israelite clans of the hill country.
 4. Faced with piecemeal destruction at the hands of the militarily superior Philistines, the Israelites needed to unite to survive. This meant they needed central leadership, and that meant they needed a king.
- V. The first king of Israel was Saul. His reign began well but ended in defeat and humiliation.
- A. Much about Saul's reign is unclear. His story is colored by folktale motifs about his selection and by the need to cast him as a foil for the national hero, David.
 - B. Saul's position as king was insecure. Its greatest weakness was that it lacked any institutional foundation. His power and legitimacy rested solely on his success as a warrior and commander, which were held to rest on divine favor.
 - C. Nevertheless, Saul was able to lay the foundations for an effective national defense.
 - D. Saul alienated the tribes, and this produced challenges to his authority.
 - E. Finally, after a disastrous defeat by the Philistines at Mount Gilboa, in which his three sons were killed and he was wounded, Saul committed suicide. His corpse was displayed on the walls of Beth-shan.

Suggested Reading:

Grant, *The History of Ancient Israel*.

Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*.

Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How should historians use the religious traditions of the cultures they study as sources of historical evidence? Should they treat the religious traditions of some cultures more favorably than others? Why or why not?
2. Does seeing the Exodus of Israel in the context of the other, more devastating migrations of peoples that took place at the same time change your perspective on the Exodus? Why or why not? If it does change your perspective, in what ways does it change it?
3. What gave Saul his authority? What weakened that authority and led to his downfall?

Lecture Eighteen

The Empire of David and Solomon

Scope: Israel's moment of imperial glory came under David and Solomon. Our information for their reigns comes almost entirely from the traditions contained in the Hebrew Bible: There is no archival evidence and little if any direct archeological evidence. David began his career serving Saul, but they fell out, and David became a rebel allied with the Philistines. After Saul was killed in battle and his son was assassinated, David was crowned king. A southerner, he won the allegiance of the northern tribes and then added conquest, vassals, and allies until his sway extended north of Damascus and south to the Sinai. David's empire was diverse, held together by personal loyalty to him, but he constructed a solid and effective army. Solomon was not the conqueror his father was. He launched expensive building projects like the Temple and exploited the northern tribes, and by the end of his reign they were alienated. The empire's unity dissolved forever shortly after his death.

Outline

- I.** Under David and his son, Solomon, Israel enjoyed its moment of imperial glory.
 - A.** Only Abraham and Moses bulk larger than David and Solomon in the national and religious memory of the Jews, but despite their importance, they remain historically elusive.
 - B.** According to the stories about him, David began his career serving Saul.
 - 1. He was a warrior who rose to high rank in Saul's army but aroused the king's jealousy and was forced to flee for his life to the hills of south Judea.
 - 2. Perhaps to secure his fragile position more firmly, David then joined with the Philistines and was their client until just before they killed Saul in battle.
 - 3. In the confusion following Saul's death, his general Abner was able to ensure the succession of Saul's surviving son, Ishbaal, to the throne. For a time there were two kingdoms: David's in Judah to the south and Ishbaal's in Israel to the north. War broke out between them.
 - 4. Unprotected and weakened, Ishbaal was assassinated. His murder left David in the paramount position. The tribes of Israel accepted his overlordship, and he was anointed king at Hebron.
 - C.** In the biblical narrative, seven years after his anointment as king, David captured the Canaanite ("Jebusite") city of Jerusalem and moved both his personal residence and the capital of his kingdom there from Hebron.
 - D.** He is remembered as having created the Davidic "empire," expanding Israel's power far beyond the confines of Canaan.
 - E.** David's empire had serious internal weaknesses, however. The gravest of them was that it lacked uniformity. It was made up of a patchwork of annexed territories, tributary states, and allied kingdoms.
 - 1. There was no royal ideology per se, but the glue that bound the realm together was charismatic kingship—personal loyalty to a warrior hero.
 - 2. Biblical texts emphasize that the king's most important asset was that he enjoyed the favor and blessing of Yahweh.
 - F.** Another grave weakness lay in the tensions between the southern tribes of Judah and the northern tribes of Israel.
 - G.** To solidify his rule, David began laying the foundations of a centralized government.
 - H.** David's army consisted of two types of troops: the royal guard and the tribal militia.
 - I.** In the area of religion, David moved to centralize the cult of Yahweh under royal sponsorship.
 - 1. The Ark of the Covenant was relocated to Jerusalem on royal orders.
 - 2. David also worked to blend Israelite and Canaanite cult practices.
 - J.** Despite, or perhaps because of, David's efforts to consolidate royal power, the kingdom remained unstable, its cohesion threatened by rebellion, focused among the northern clans.
- II.** David's younger son, Solomon, succeeded him on the throne. Solomon is remembered not as a conqueror like his father, but rather for his centralization of royal power.
 - A.** Solomon's succession was accompanied, in typical Near Eastern fashion, by dynastic bloodshed.
 - 1. In David's old age, his eldest surviving son, Adonijah, began acting as king, performing royal sacrificial duties and collecting political support.
 - 2. Solomon was only 10th in line for the throne, but he had carefully lined up support for his own ambitions.
 - 3. David's intervention was what gave the throne to Solomon.
 - 4. Once on the throne, Solomon acted swiftly against those who had supported his older brother's cause and launched a palace purge.

- B. Under Solomon, control of religion was centralized under the king. This was embodied in his construction of the Temple.
- C. More so than his father, Solomon recognized and exploited the kingdom's commercial potential, which arose from its geographic location.
- D. Solomon established a formal revenue structure for the kingdom.

III. The empire of David and Solomon was short-lived. It collapsed swiftly following Solomon's death.

- A. The biblical account of the disintegration of the United Monarchy is contained in 1 Kings.
- B. Truth be told, the Davidic empire had already begun to disintegrate late in Solomon's reign.
 - 1. By the time of his death, Solomon had already lost control over the vassal states of Aram-Zobah and Damascus in the north and Edom in the south.
 - 2. The loss of these vassals crippled Israel commercially and militarily.
 - 3. Furthermore, the loss of these areas only increased the pressures on what was left of Solomon's subjects, since he did not scale back his projects and the demands that he made.
- C. Historically speaking, the collapse of the United Monarchy had clear secular causes. At its base, it was fragile. It consisted of disparate parts that had been assembled quickly and had not had time to develop institutional stability and integrity.
- D. After the United Monarchy disintegrated into the separate kingdoms of Israel and Judah, neither one of them ever came close to recovering the power of David and Solomon's realm, and each eventually fell victim to the great powers that arose in Mesopotamia.

Suggested Reading:

Bright, *A History of Israel*.

Finkelstein and Silberman, *David and Solomon*.

Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel*.

Grant, *The History of Ancient Israel*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. How correct is it to speak of a "united monarchy" under David and Solomon? To what extent was their realm one in which the 2 southern tribes (the later kingdom of Judah) exercised dominion over the 10 northern tribes (the later kingdom of Israel)?
- 2. "The only things that made David and Solomon's empire possible were the destruction of the major powers of the Near East at the end of the Bronze Age and the talent of David himself. There was no solid economic or demographic basis for an empire based in the hill tribes of Canaan." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
- 3. Why might have led David and Solomon to treat the 10 northern tribes the way they did?

Lecture Nineteen

The Dawn of Assyria

Scope: Although their millennia-long history exceeds that of almost any other Near Eastern people, the Assyrians are remembered mostly for their brutality. In fact, their actions differed only in degree from those of their neighbors. The Assyrians were a diverse people bound together by a shared language and religious cult. Their origins lie in the stirrings of urban civilization in northern Mesopotamia during the mid-3rd millennium B.C., when they were a merchant folk. The first ruler to create an empire centered on Assyria was the Amorite Shamshi-Adad in the early 2nd millennium. Assyrian power receded after his death but recovered under the rulers of the Middle Assyrian period in the late 2nd millennium, who capitalized on the Hittites' crushing of Mitanni to create an empire in the northern Fertile Crescent, which stood on par with Hatti, Egypt, and Babylonia. But like them, the Middle Assyrian empire fell victim to the upheavals that marked the end of the Bronze Age.

Outline

- I. We turn now to Assyria. Assyria was one of the greatest nations in all of antiquity, with a history that spanned more than 1,000 years, during which it came into contact or conflict with every imperial power in the Near East and forged one of the greatest empires the ancient world would ever know.
 - A. The Assyrians are often portrayed as pitiless brutes who ruthlessly employed terror against their neighbors and genocide against their defeated enemies.
 - B. Maybe what the Assyrians ought to be remembered for is a different list of things.
 1. For the fact that they endured, surrounded by enemies, for more than a millennium.
 2. For their tenacity in repeatedly overcoming defeat and rising once more to greatness.
 3. For creating the greatest empire the Near East had ever seen, an empire that for one brief moment united almost the entire Near East into one single imperial entity.
 - C. Our sources for Assyrian history are very uneven. They vary dramatically in nature, quantity, and reliability from one era in Assyria's history to the next.
 - D. Geographically speaking, Assyria lies in Upper Mesopotamia. It takes its name from the city of Ashur, which lay about 60 miles south of modern Mosul, at a strategically important location on the west bank of the Tigris.
 - E. The Assyrians lacked the sort of blood identity that bound other ancient peoples together. Thanks to the ethnic mixing that resulted from practices like deportation, Assyria became a melting pot.
- II. Assyria's origins lie in the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C., but down to about 2000, Assyria was a backwater district under the heel of the great conquerors who came up from the south.
 - A. It was during the mid-3rd millennium that real urban life arose in Assyria. This was when Ashur, Nineveh, and Erbil all became important towns.
 - B. We do know that in the late 24th century, Assyria was conquered by Sargon the Great, and it remained a part of the Akkadian empire until Akkad collapsed about 120 years later.
 - C. After the collapse of Akkad, Assyria became a province in the empire of Ur III.
 - D. Of course, Ur III's authority faded completely out of existence at the end of the 3rd millennium, leaving a political vacuum throughout Mesopotamia, within which local and regional kingdoms jockeyed with one another for power. The main contenders for power were Isin and Larsa.
- III. The jockeying for advantage in central and southern Mesopotamia kept the city dynasts there distracted and left a power vacuum in the north that allowed independent powers to rise. It was in this power vacuum that Assyria first rose to prominence, inaugurating the Old Assyrian period.
 - A. The collapse of Ur III gave the cities of Assyria their first taste of freedom in several centuries. They soon became the focus of an important regional trading network.
 - B. It was during the last decades of Assyria's mercantile power that the colorful figure of Shamshi-Adad arose. The first ruler to unify Assyria and expand its authority outside the Assyrian homeland, he created a realm that historians call the kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia. Shamshi-Adad's kingdom disappeared suddenly, in circumstances that are unclear.
 - C. Hammurabi turned Assyria into a vassal kingdom of his empire, placing it under Ishme-Dagan, Shamshi-Adad's competent son, but as we've seen, Hammurabi's realm disintegrated soon after his death.
 1. The Sumerian king list indicates that at least the royal line continued, and in fact all the way down to the fall of Assyria, Assyrian kings traced their lineage back to a King Adasi, who supposedly reigned in the 16th century.

2. During the middle of the 15th century, Assyria was conquered by the Mitannian king Sausattar and turned into a Mitannian vassal state.

IV. Phoenix-like, Assyria rose from the ashes of humiliation and reclaimed imperial power during the Middle Assyrian period, during the last half of the 2nd millennium.

- A. The real revival began under Ashur-uballit I, who ruled from 1363 to 1328 and laid the foundations of the Assyrian empire. During his reign, Assyria went from being a vassal of Mitanni to being one of the great powers of the Bronze Age Near East.
 1. Ashur-uballit asserted Assyrian authority over Mesopotamia and demanded equal precedence with the Egyptian pharaoh, Akhenaten.
 2. Still, despite Ashur-uballit's successes, under his successors Assyria remained vulnerable.
- B. All that changed with the accession of Adad-Nirari I in 1305. Ruling for 30 years, he was Assyria's first great conqueror king.
 1. He expanded Assyrian power over northern Syria and into central Mesopotamia and boasted of his triumphs over Assyria's hostile neighbors, describing himself as "the conqueror of the ferocious ones—the hordes of the Kassites, the Qutians, the Lullumeans, and the Subarians."
 2. Capitalizing on Hittite weakness after Gasga tribesmen captured and sacked Hattusas, Adad-Nirari annexed the Hittite client state of Mitanni and made it into an Assyrian vassal.
 3. But the seizure of Mitanni gave Assyria control of all of the northern Fertile Crescent as far west as the great bend of the Euphrates, which meant that Assyria now dominated the main trade routes of the ancient Near East, which ran along the upper reaches of the Tigris and the Euphrates, both of which were now under its rule.
- C. Adad-Nirari's successors built on the foundations he laid.
 1. Shalmaneser I tightened the royal grip on the empire by replacing vassal rulers with Assyrian governors and for the first time led Assyrian armies into the mountains of Armenia, pillaging and destroying more than 50 settlements in the land of Urartu.
 2. Shalmaneser's son Tikulti-Ninurta I, who came to the throne in 1243, went back to Adad-Nirari's policy of aggressive imperialism and pushed the empire's frontiers to the west and south.
- D. Tikulti-Ninurta's assassination inaugurated another episode of Assyrian decline. Royal power was unstable for nearly a century afterward.
- E. Assyria's fortunes once again recovered, though only briefly, under Tiglath-pileser I, who came to the throne in 1114 and ruled for nearly 40 years.
- F. After Tiglath-pileser's death, continuing Aramaean attacks devastated Assyrian agricultural resources, which led to famine. Once again, Assyrian power spiraled into decline, and Assyrian control over Syria and northern Mesopotamia disintegrated as the Aramaeans turned from marauding to settlement. Finally, by the end of the 11th century, Assyria had shrunk back to its heartland around Ashur, Erbil, and Nineveh.

Suggested Reading:

Roux, *Ancient Iraq*.

Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Since Assyria's actions differed only in degree from those of its contemporaries, why would Assyria be held up as the exemplar of imperial brutality?
2. What advantages and disadvantages did Assyria enjoy thanks to its geographic location? What role did geography play in Assyria's rise to power?
3. After a series of short-lived local empires in Mesopotamia and the northern Fertile Crescent during the late 3rd and early 2nd millennia, what might explain the emergence in Assyria of an empire that was able to endure longer than the reign of a single conqueror?

Lecture Twenty

The Rise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire

Scope: Assyria entered its great era of imperial glory late in the 10th century B.C., with the dawn of the New Kingdom, or the Neo-Assyrian empire. The era was characterized by a new aggressiveness and a new severity. Through annual campaigning, a series of capable monarchs had established Assyria as the Near East's preeminent power by the end of the 9th century, ruling an empire that spanned the upper Fertile Crescent and was troubled only by weak but independent neighbors in Babylonia, Egypt, and the Armenian mountain kingdom of Urartu. Then a massive internal revolt halted Assyria's expansion, and for nearly 100 years its kings had to fight Babylonia and Urartu, as well as rebellious subjects, to keep the empire alive. In the end they were successful, and they set the stage for the revival of Assyria's fortunes that began in the late 8th century.

Outline

- I. At the end of the 10th century B.C., Assyria emerged from its dark age and began its era of imperial glory, the period known as the Neo-Assyrian empire.
 - A. As with earlier eras in Assyrian history, cycles of rise and decline characterized Assyria's imperial fortunes.
 - B. The Neo-Assyrian empire was also characterized by a more aggressive spirit than Assyria had shown in the past. From the very beginning, Neo-Assyrian monarchs campaigned almost every year, whether they needed to or not, and during the course of their reigns, most of them also campaigned on every one of the empire's frontiers.
- II. The earliest enemies that the Neo-Assyrians faced were the Aramaeans. Their migrations had swept across the upper Fertile Crescent, causing the disintegration of the Middle Assyrian Empire and ushering in the dark age that began in the middle of the 11th century.
 - A. The Aramaeans' origins are hard to pick out, and they never created any great empires of their own, but they ultimately emerged as one of the most important and influential peoples in the entire history of the ancient Near East.
 1. Within four centuries of their first appearance, their language had become the lingua franca of the ancient Near East, and it remained the common language of the ancient Near East for 1,000 years.
 2. The Aramaean invasions were probably made possible by the disintegration of the Hittite and Egyptian empires around 1200, together with the breakup of Tikulti-Ninurta's Assyrian empire following his assassination in 1207.
 - B. The Aramaeans established themselves throughout Syria as far south as Damascus. By the mid-10th century, they'd advanced through the northern Fertile Crescent nearly to the borders of the Assyrian homeland, where they spread over the region southeast of Ashur, along the Tigris south of the Lesser Zab River, and occupied the area west of Nineveh, around Nisibis.
- III. The story of the first phase of the Neo-Assyrian empire is the story of a series of harsh and vigorous monarchs.
 - A. The founder of the empire was Ashur-Dan II (r. 934–912). He was the first Assyrian king in more than a century to campaign regularly.
 - B. His son, Adad-Nirari II, was an even more active campaigner. During his 20-year reign, there were only 3 years when he did not take the field.
 - C. It was Ashurnasirpal II who established Assyria as the greatest power in the Near East. He came to the throne in 884.
 1. He built a new capital at Calah on the Tigris, which became one of the great cities of the ancient Near East and remained the imperial capital for a century and a half.
 2. Like his predecessors, he was a compulsive campaigner, leading the army into the field almost every year, fighting no fewer than 14 major campaigns between 883 and 866. Like Adad-Nirari's, his campaigns took him in every direction.
 - D. Ashurnasirpal's son Shalmaneser III (r. 858–824) was cast from his father's mould. His reign marks the apogee in the early phase of the Neo-Assyrian empire.
 1. He continued the now-traditional practice of annual campaigning, averaging a campaign a year during his 34 years on the throne.
 2. Like previous Neo-Assyrian kings, he campaigned in every direction, but he seems to have at least begun with some sort of strategic plan that focused on Assyria's northern and western frontiers.
 3. Despite these successes, the closing years of Shalmaneser's reign were darkened by a massive revolt within Assyria itself.

IV. The Rebellion of 827 plunged Assyria into nearly 80 years of internal chaos.

- A.** When Shalmaneser died in 823, his son Shamshi-Adad V inherited an empire in crisis, which he held together through sheer military energy.
- B.** Shamshi-Adad's son Adad-Nirari III took the throne in 810 and won a string of impressive victories, even though the wounds of the rebellion remained unhealed.
- C.** The empire went into a steep decline during the 40 years after his death in 783. The enemies and problems that confronted Assyria between 783 and 743 were present under Adad-Nirari III but had now reached dangerous levels.
 - 1.** To the north, the kingdom of Urartu was reaching the pinnacle of its power.
 - 2.** Babylonia was a chronic thorn in Assyria's southern flank.
 - 3.** Syria presented different challenges from those of Babylonia. There it was restive subjects who caused the problems, and successive Assyrian kings were able to do little more than campaign in the area without pacifying it.
 - 4.** The greatest danger of all during these dark decades, however, lay in the Assyrian heartland itself, where there were repeated uprisings, which proved that the grievances that had sparked the rebellion still festered.
 - 5.** An important feature of this time of troubles was the emergence of an increasingly powerful imperial aristocracy. In the years beginning with the Rebellion of 827, Assyrian provincial governors had acquired a dangerous degree of independence from royal authority.

Suggested Reading:

Roux, *Ancient Iraq*.

Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1.** What enabled Assyria to rise once more to power after the collapse of its previous empire at the end of the Bronze Age, when other states, such as Egypt, failed?
- 2.** What might account for the new aggressiveness and harshness exhibited by the monarchs of the Neo-Assyrian period?
- 3.** How did Assyria deal with the threats to its empire from its neighbors in this period? Why did Assyria adopt the approach it did? What approach should it have adopted?

Lecture Twenty-One

The Government of Assyria

Scope: The Assyrian king was a warrior king, protector of the land and the people. He was the earthly regent of the god Ashur, with the sacred duty of bringing the world under Ashur's authority, so that the forces of chaos would be subjugated and order would prevail. At first, the territories of the Assyrian empire were divided up into a core territory, the Assyrian heartland, comprised of provinces administered by governors, and the outlying territories, made up of vassal states under native rulers. The later Neo-Assyrian kings converted most of these vassal states into directly ruled Assyrian provinces. All Assyrian subjects swore oaths of loyalty on their own gods and on Ashur. The Assyrians' reputation for brutality actually grew out of their harsh treatment of rebels, who were oath breakers and, consequently, enemies of the gods. The Assyrians' deportation of defeated peoples was actually a common Near Eastern practice and often enabled deportees to have a better life in their new homes.

Outline

- I. It will come as no surprise that the government, administration, and economy of Assyria were highly centralized. And of course, the king was the focal point, both of Assyrian government and of the administration of the empire.
 - A. Because Assyrian history extends over more than a millennium, far longer than the history of any other Near Eastern kingdom besides Egypt, we can see that the Assyrian monarchy was not a static institution. On the contrary, it evolved noticeably over the course of the 2nd millennium B.C., from modest beginnings to clear royal absolutism.
 - B. As was the case in almost every Near Eastern realm, the Assyrian view of kingship was expressed in the royal ideology. Like the monarchy, that ideology reached its ultimate form in the Neo-Assyrian period.
 1. At the heart of Assyrian royal ideology lay the king's intimate connection to the gods, which expressed the Assyrians' intense devotion to their religion.
 2. The king was also portrayed as a supremely victorious warrior, the protector of the land and the people—an image universal among Near Eastern monarchs. The king kept them safe from both internal and external threats, and his victories brought prosperity and stability to all Assyrians.
 3. In sum, Assyrian royal ideology saw the king as the guarantor of order, stability, and well-being.
 - C. The Assyrians were an intensely religious people, and their imperial policy was shaped by their devotion to the gods. War was seen not as a secular act of military aggression but as a divine imperative.
 - D. Despite the emphasis on order and harmony that was associated with Assyrian kingship, the royal succession was a frequent source of unrest.
 1. Rebellion or civil war often accompanied a change in monarchs.
 2. Royal legitimacy was often an unspoken concern, lurking just beneath the surface.
 - E. In addition to the central role played by the king in political, military, and religious affairs, the royal court was the most important economic institution in Assyria as well.
- II. To run their empire, the Assyrians developed the most comprehensive apparatus of imperial administration that the Near East had yet seen.
 - A. We know the titles of the senior officials who ran the empire's central administration, but we know relatively little about its day-to-day workings.
 - B. The Assyrians divided the empire up into two broad types of territories: the Land of Ashur and the Yoke of Ashur.
 1. The Land of Ashur comprised the Assyrian heartland—the region around Ashur, Nineveh, Erbil, and Calah—and was headed by a governor-general.
 2. Down to the Neo-Assyrian period, the Yoke of Ashur consisted of vassal states.
 - C. During the early Neo-Assyrian period, due to the chronic rebelliousness of many vassals, the Assyrians began turning vassal states into provinces under direct Assyrian rule.
 - D. Within the provinces of the empire there were numerous cities, which functioned as the lowest level of administration.
 - E. Because money was only invented in the late 7th century, the Assyrians collected tribute and taxes in their empire in the form of produce, building materials, minerals, labor, and so forth.
 - F. To link their empire together, the Assyrians built an efficient road system.
 1. Way stations were built at intervals along the roads for the use of couriers and officials and were provided with mule teams for royal messengers.

2. Use of the road system's facilities was carefully controlled through warrants issued by the kings (either on clay tablets in Akkadian or on papyrus or parchment in Aramaic) and bearing the royal seal, which authorized travelers to use either the overnight hostels or animal transport.

III. The Assyrians are infamous even today for their brutality, seen in their harsh treatment of defeated enemies. But this brutality was actually an expression of the Assyrians' obsession with the sanctity of oaths and the maintenance of order in the face of chaos. Most episodes of brutality involved the punishment of rebels.

- A. Recall that all royal subjects swore solemn oaths of loyalty to the king, either personally or via a governor acting as royal proxy.
- B. The loyalty oaths grew out of the Assyrians' intense religiosity.
 1. The oaths included divinely decreed punishments for those who broke their trust. Such oath breakers were regarded as enemies of the gods, allies of the forces of evil and chaos.
 2. It was the king's sacred duty to make an example of those who broke divinely sanctioned oaths.
 3. This brutal treatment of rebels was felt to demonstrate that the king embodied a moral force, that he knew right from wrong and good from evil and would punish evil remorselessly.
 4. But signs of true penitence and heartfelt submission could persuade kings to be merciful.

IV. One of the most infamous Assyrian practices was the deportation of conquered populations.

- A. However, as we have seen repeatedly, the Assyrians were not alone in practicing deportation. It was a common practice both before and after the Assyrians.
- B. The Assyrians did greatly expand their own use of deportation during the Neo-Assyrian period, after the mid-8th century.
- C. Assyrian treatment of deported populations was less harsh than people think.
 1. Deported populations were cared for by the Assyrians during their period in transit, and once settled, they were treated much the same as ordinary Assyrians.
 2. Deportees appear to have assimilated happily into their new homes.
- D. Deportations often involved "exchanges" of population. The Assyrians frequently resettled recently deported areas with deportees from other regions.
- E. The objective of deportation was more economic than punitive.
 1. The shuffling of populations that resulted from deportation was central to an effort to expand the agricultural base of the empire, by moving people to uncultivated but fertile lands.
 2. Deportees were also employed in nonagricultural capacities.
- F. There is no evidence that deportees posed any security threat; on the contrary, many of them were employed in sensitive jobs.

Suggested Reading:

Roux, *Ancient Iraq*.

Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How did religious faith influence Assyrian imperial policy? If we accept the Assyrians' beliefs about the importance of combating chaos and defending divinely sanctioned order, does that make it easier to justify the employment of harsh measures against rebels?
2. How does the Assyrian system of imperial administration resemble those of other Near Eastern states? How does it differ? What accounts for those differences and similarities?
3. "Deportation was, on the whole, beneficial for everyone concerned." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

Lecture Twenty-Two

Assyria at War

Scope: Occupying the northern Fertile Crescent, Assyria lacked defensible frontiers and throughout its long existence had to battle its neighbors on every front, particularly Babylonia. To survive, the Assyrians had to become masters of the art of war, and they developed the most efficient military machine the ancient Near East had yet seen. The Assyrian army reached the peak of its development under the monarchs of the Neo-Assyrian period and became a model emulated by later Near Eastern imperial states, including Persia. The main combat branches of the Assyrian army were the infantry and the mounted troops. The infantry included heavy infantry for line combat and light infantry, or skirmishers. The mounted troops comprised both chariot units and heavy cavalry, both armed with bows. The heart of the army was a regular standing force of professionals, many of them recruited from among deported populations. Assyrians were a devout people, so war was very much a religious undertaking.

Outline

- I. Assyria was always a nation at war, because Assyria was always a nation under threat.
 - A. Like all other empires centered in Mesopotamia, Assyria lacked defensible frontiers and faced threats to its borders on all sides.
 - B. To the south, Babylonia posed the most intractable security challenge of all. Throughout Assyrian history, it festered as something we could call the Babylonian Problem.
 1. Babylonia was the only civilized, centralized state in close proximity to Assyria.
 2. We have to give the Assyrians credit: They tried every imaginable solution to the Babylonian Problem. Nothing worked.
 3. A factor that greatly complicated the Babylonian Problem was the meddling of Babylonia's neighbors: Elam and the Chaldeans.
 4. Ultimately, the Assyrians' dark forebodings about the Babylonian Problem proved true. When doom came upon Assyria, it came from Babylonia, in the form of Nabopolassar the Chaldean.
- II. Given the multiple threats that it faced, it comes as no surprise that warfare was the chief focus of the Assyrian state, nor is it surprising that the Assyrians developed the most effective military machine the Near East had ever seen.
 - A. The Assyrian army evolved with the other elements of imperial rule over the course of Assyrian history. It reached its definitive form under Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II.
 - B. Naturally, supreme command of the army lay with the king.
 - C. The two main combat branches of the Assyrian army were the infantry and the mounted troops.
 1. The infantry was the most numerous arm of the Assyrian army. There were the usual varieties of infantry, defined by their equipment and mission.
 2. The mounted arm comprised both chariot troops and heavy cavalry.
 3. The Assyrian army also included engineer units.
 4. As was true elsewhere, the armor worn by Assyrian troops was comparatively light by later Western standards.
 - D. Recruitment evolved with the growth of the empire.
 1. At first, Assyria relied on a national army drawn from peasant landholders. Responsibility for the recruitment of troops lay with the governors.
 2. Tiglath-pileser III drastically reorganized the army, replacing the annual levy of troops with a three-tiered force.
 3. We know only the outlines of the army's unit organization.
 4. We do know that the empire was dotted with military garrison posts. The royal guard was stationed in the capital, and each governor had troops in his province with which to maintain order and defend the empire's borders.
 - E. Providing the men with arms and equipment was an industry in itself. Equipment was stored and troops and horses were trained at large arsenals in the heartland cities.
 - F. Assyria had no navy, so it used ships and sailors from Phoenicia, even against rebels in the Sealand marshes.
 - G. Campaigns typically followed a regular schedule and plan.
 1. The timing was dictated by the weather.
 2. A campaign began with inspections and military reviews, as well as consultation with the gods.
 3. The army typically drew its supplies from the territories through which it marched.
 4. At the end of a campaign, the captives and booty the army had taken were paraded through the streets of the Assyrian capital.

- H. Assyrian tactics emphasized formal warfare: siege warfare and pitched battles.
- III. Since the Assyrians were an extremely devout people, war was very much a religious undertaking for them, not only in the ceremonies that attended the army's departure on campaign but in the very rationale for war in the first place.
 - A. Behind their wars lurked the imperative to expand the area of the world that was under the sway of the supreme god, Ashur, imposing order on the chaos.
 - B. Those wars that were suppressions of rebellions had the mission of punishing those who had broken their sacred oaths of loyalty to Ashur's viceroy, the king of Assyria.
 - C. Perhaps the surest testimonial to Assyrian piety was that when the war was done and victory secured, Assyrian monarchs did not claim the victory for themselves. They assigned that credit to the gods, and especially to Ashur.

Suggested Reading:

Roux, *Ancient Iraq*.

Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How did the Assyrian army differ from the armies of other Near Eastern empires? How was it similar? What gave it its remarkable effectiveness?
2. What use did the Assyrians make of missile tactics (javelins and arrows) and shock tactics (close combat)? How did that contribute to their army's effectiveness?
3. Why would the Assyrians trust deported persons sufficiently to use them as regular troops? Why would the deportees fight for Assyria?

Lecture Twenty-Three

The Climax and Collapse of Assyria

Scope: In the late 8th and 7th centuries B.C., Assyria became the first nation ever to establish an empire that spanned the entire Near East. Under a series of great warrior kings, beginning with Tiglath-pileser III, the Assyrians crushed the troublesome Armenian kingdom of Urartu; conquered the Levant, exterminating the kingdom of Israel and deporting its population; destroyed the great city of Babylon, annexing Babylonia; and finally invaded and seized control of Egypt. By 665, no rival powers survived to challenge Assyrian supremacy. And then the mighty edifice of the Assyrian empire suddenly collapsed: Egypt shook off Assyrian rule; then Babylonia rose in rebellion. Joined by the Medes, an Iranian people who dwelt in the Zagros mountains east of the Assyrian homeland, the Babylonians beat down Assyrian resistance and destroyed the Assyrian homeland. The last embers of Assyrian resistance were snuffed out in Upper Mesopotamia in 605. The Assyrians vanished from the stage of Near Eastern history, never to reappear.

Outline

- I. The climax of Assyrian power came between 744 and 630 B.C., as Assyria became the first empire ever to dominate the entire Near East.
 - A. Despite Assyria's dominant position, though, its history during this period still exhibits the same patterns that we have seen before: relentless pressure from enemies on all sides and ceaseless, exhausting warfare, either in defense or in pursuit of imperial power.
 - B. Assyria's golden age was inaugurated by Tiglath-pileser III, the first in the series of great kings who ruled the empire during its days of glory.
 1. When he came to the throne in 744, the empire had been reduced to northern Mesopotamia and Syria east of the Euphrates bend.
 2. But by his death in 727, he had advanced Assyria's borders in all directions.
 - C. Tiglath-pileser was followed on the throne by his son, Shalmaneser V. We do not know much about his five-year reign. His most notorious deed was the destruction of Israel.
 - D. Like Tiglath-pileser, Sargon II came to the throne under suspicious circumstances.
 1. His name intentionally recalled the glories of the first Sargon, but it also suggests that he, too, had a questionable claim to the throne.
 2. Immediately following his accession, the usual rebellions broke out, this time in Syria and Palestine.
 3. During the rest of his reign, Sargon led a series of campaigns in northern Syria and Anatolia, mostly against King Midas of Phrygia, who had allied with the nascent Urartu.
 4. Whenever he was not fighting Midas, Sargon occupied himself with the war against Urartu. He won back territory that had slipped out of Assyrian control, expanded the empire, and finally dealt a crippling blow to this long-time enemy.
 5. Sargon's life came to a premature end in 705, when he marched against hostile tribesmen in the Taurus Mountains north of Cilicia and was killed in battle.
- II. The 7th century saw Assyria reach the pinnacle of its power under three great rulers.
 - A. Sennacherib, the son of Sargon II, was an experienced general and administrator, and he brought that experience to bear on stabilizing and expanding the empire.
 1. Babylonia was a major headache for Sennacherib throughout his reign, posing a threat to the Assyrian heartland's southern frontier.
 2. Sennacherib tried almost every expedient available to deal with the Babylonian Problem but only succeeded in exacerbating Babylonian hostility.
 3. Sennacherib also campaigned in Palestine against rebels, beginning in 701, and again at the end of his reign.
 4. After returning home, Sennacherib was murdered in 681, in a rebellion led by one or more of his sons.
 - B. Esarhaddon was a campaigner in the Assyrian tradition, taking the field nearly every year of his reign. Like his predecessors, he had to fight on every front, but he also began the last great expansion of Assyria's empire.
 1. He began the conquest of Egypt, an endeavor that was finally aborted by his death.
 2. Unrest in the Levant and Cilicia marred Esarhaddon's victories elsewhere and repeatedly diverted his attention from Egypt.
 3. To deal with the Babylonian Problem, Esarhaddon tried to make up for his father's savage treatment of Babylon by appeasing Babylonian pride.

4. To avoid chaos in the succession, he had his son Ashurbanipal recognized as heir to the throne of Assyria and his son Shamash-shum-ukin as heir to the throne of Babylonia. He also required Assyria's vassals to sign treaties vowing to uphold the succession.
- C. Ashurbanipal was the last great Assyrian king. Under him, the empire reached its greatest extent.
 1. His foremost accomplishment was finishing the conquest of Egypt.
 2. The Levant was quiet under Ashurbanipal, except for Tyre, which stubbornly defied Assyrian power.
 3. On Assyria's northern frontier, Ashurbanipal, as usual, had to contend with the hostility of the mountain peoples.
 4. Babylonia of course remained Assyria's greatest source of trouble. The most important event was the Great Rebellion, which was led by the king of Babylonia, Ashurbanipal's brother Shamash-shum-ukin.
 5. Following the suppression of the Great Rebellion, Ashurbanipal appointed a shadowy figure named Kandalanu to rule Babylonia.
- III. When it came, the collapse of the Assyrian empire was sudden, dramatic, and final. In 630 all appeared normal; by 605 the last shreds of the empire had vanished.
 - A. The closing years of Ashurbanipal's reign and the ones following it are obscured by a sudden lack of evidence.
 - B. The immediate cause of the collapse of the Assyrian empire is clear: the rebellion of Babylonia under Nabopolassar.
 - C. If the immediate cause of the collapse of the Assyrian empire was the uprising of Nabopolassar and the hostility of the Medes, the underlying causes must be sought within the empire itself.
 1. One was the brutality with which Assyria treated rebels. It bore its bitter fruit in the hatred that Babylonia felt toward Assyria in the late 7th century.
 2. But the primary cause must have been the overextension of imperial resources, which exhausted the empire's strength.

Suggested Reading:

Roux, *Ancient Iraq*.

Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria*.

Questions to Consider:

1. The Assyrians produced a series of capable warrior kings that spanned nearly the entire Neo-Assyrian period. How were they able to accomplish this?
2. What factors made the Assyrians such a formidable force on the battlefield?
3. After the conquest of Egypt, the Assyrians seem to have run out of the energy to maintain their empire. Do you think this was a failure of will or a failure of means? What can account for it?

Lecture Twenty-Four

The Neo-Babylonian Empire

Scope: The last flowering of Mesopotamian imperial power came in the late 7th and early 6th centuries B.C. It began when the Chaldean Nabopolassar led a massive Babylonian uprising against Assyrian rule in the 620s. With Median assistance, Nabopolassar destroyed Assyria; then he and his successor, Nebuchadnezzar, went on to conquer an empire that took in both the northern Fertile Crescent and the Levant. Little information has been recovered that casts light on the organization and administration of the Neo-Babylonian empire or its army. It appears that in many ways the Neo-Babylonians modeled their empire on that of the Assyrians. The Neo-Babylonian empire was short-lived. For reasons that are obscure, Nebuchadnezzar's successor, Nabonidus, absented himself in northern Arabia for 10 years, then returned to confront popular discontent and the attacks of a Persian conqueror, Cyrus the Great. The combination of the two led to the collapse of the Neo-Babylonian empire and a permanent end to Mesopotamian independence.

Outline

- I.** Mesopotamia had been eclipsed on the stage of imperial power ever since the collapse of the Kassites late in the 2nd millennium B.C. Then ultimately it was humiliated by being reduced to a mere restive client and occasional province of Assyria. But in the late 7th and early 6th centuries, it enjoyed a last brief imperial renaissance: the Chaldean, or Neo-Babylonian, empire.
 - A.** The Neo-Babylonians were the self-conscious heirs of the long imperial tradition of Mesopotamia, a tradition that included some of the greatest names in Near Eastern history.
 - B.** The sources for the Neo-Babylonian empire are very similar to those for all the earlier periods in Mesopotamian history.
 1. There is no narrative material.
 2. Fortunately, there is plenty of archival material, but its subject matter—and its utility as historical evidence—is very uneven.
 3. There is also abundant archeological evidence. From the standpoint of art and architecture, the Neo-Babylonian period was the most brilliant era in all of Babylonia's long history.
- II.** The Neo-Babylonian empire was the creation of Nabopolassar, who masterminded the destruction of the Assyrian empire during the late 7th century.
 - A.** Assyria had fallen very swiftly from the zenith of its power in the mid-7th century. By the early 620s, its control over Mesopotamia was slipping away.
 - B.** In 626, Nabopolassar seized the throne in the teeth of both Babylonian and Assyrian resistance.
 - C.** After consolidating his grip on Babylonia, Nabopolassar set about destroying the remainder of the Assyrian empire.
 - D.** The victorious Neo-Babylonians then assumed Assyria's imperial mantle, rounding out the borders of their realm to the old frontiers of the Assyrian empire.
- III.** Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest and most famous of the Neo-Babylonian kings.
 - A.** He stands out as the foremost military leader of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty, but that impression may be skewed by our sketchy sources.
 - B.** Nebuchadnezzar devoted most of his reign to fighting for control of the Levant.
 1. Eight of the nine campaigns he fought between 604 and 594 were focused there.
 2. The kingdom of Judah was a particular source of trouble. Phoenicia was also a major trouble spot.
 3. Egypt's efforts to disrupt Nebuchadnezzar's control over the Levant involved open warfare as well as diplomatic intrigues.
 4. The Egyptian intrusion into the Levant in 589 prompted Zedekiah of Judah to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar.
 5. Even after securing control over the Levant, Nebuchadnezzar was unable to penetrate the defenses of Egypt.
 6. The eastern frontier appears to have remained quiet during Nebuchadnezzar's reign.
 - C.** The administration of the Neo-Babylonian empire is obscure.
 1. The fiscal system, provincial government, courts, and military organization are very poorly understood because there are virtually no texts documenting Babylonian administration.
 2. What scanty information there is indicates that Neo-Babylonian administration lacked uniformity.

- D. It would appear that the system of provinces and tribute resembled that of the Assyrians and may have been modeled on theirs.
 - 1. Governors were responsible for collecting taxes and tribute for the king.
 - 2. The ration texts recovered in small numbers from the palace in Babylon show that some people there received sustenance from the king.
- IV. Just as Mesopotamian political power enjoyed a renaissance under the Neo-Babylonians, so also did Mesopotamian culture and economic life.
 - A. Large tracts of land were opened to cultivation. Peace enabled the expansion of irrigation systems and the construction of an extensive canal system.
 - B. Mesopotamian society was more urbanized under the Neo-Babylonians than at any time since Ur III.
 - C. Nebuchadnezzar was a spectacular builder. He rebuilt all the major cities of Babylonia on a lavish scale. His building activity at Babylon turned it into the immense and beautiful city of legend.
 - D. The countryside was dominated by large estates.
 - E. The Neo-Babylonian kings continued the Assyrian practice of deporting and resettling conquered peoples.
 - F. Neo-Babylonian rulers were very conscious of the antiquity of their heritage and pursued an arch-traditionalist policy of reviving ancient Babylonian culture.
- V. The Neo-Babylonian empire was short-lived. It survived Nebuchadnezzar's death by barely a generation.
 - A. Following his death, there was chaos on the throne for seven years. We have no idea why.
 - B. Nabonidus was put on the throne by the nobles who had murdered Labashi-Marduk. His accession brought an end to the dynastic turmoil, and he remained king until the end of the Neo-Babylonian empire.
 - C. In 553, only a couple of years after taking the throne, he began what proved to be a lengthy and mysterious sojourn in northern Arabia, leaving Belshazzar as viceroy in Babylon.
 - D. Nabonidus's long absence in Arabia has marred his image ever since. But it has to be understood in the context of Arabia's importance.
 - E. Why did Nabonidus not simply conquer the region and appoint a governor? Why did he take up residence for an entire 10 years? Was his absence a form of exile?
 - 1. The traditional view is that he took up residence in Arabia for religious reasons. But none of Nabonidus's inscriptions from his north Arabian sojourn mention his religious activities.
 - 2. Some scholars think he moved to Arabia to establish control over alternative trade routes between Mesopotamia and the ports of the Levant.
 - 3. On a temple dedication from Harran in eastern Syria, Nabonidus himself tells us that he left Babylon in response to a political crisis that erupted early in his reign.
 - 4. Why did Nabonidus choose Teima as his residence? Nabonidus himself says that he went there as a conqueror.
 - 5. What is clear is that Nabonidus's prolonged absence alienated the powerful priesthood of Marduk, the chief god of Babylon.
 - F. Nabonidus finally returned to Babylon in 543, and when he arrived, he launched a series of purges.
- VI. The collapse of the Neo-Babylonian empire came in 539, a mere 75 years after its birth.
 - A. The immediate cause of the fall of the Neo-Babylonian empire was the attack of Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian empire.
 - B. The cause of the collapse of the Neo-Babylonian empire may have been as simple as popular resentment of Nabonidus's regime.
 - C. Though Mesopotamia continued to prosper economically, Mesopotamian independence came to an end with the Persian conquest of Babylon and has never revived. It became, and remains, an ancient land under foreign rule.

Suggested Reading:

Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus*.

Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*.

Leick, *The Babylonians*.

Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways was the Neo-Babylonian empire innovative? In what ways was it an exercise in nostalgia for the glories of Mesopotamia's past?
2. Nabopolassar masterminded the destruction of the Assyrian empire but also adopted many of its practices. What does that suggest about his motives for attacking Assyria?
3. For 2,500 years, Mesopotamia was home to independent kingdoms, often ones of imperial extent. What reasons can you suggest for why Mesopotamia never regained its independence after the collapse of the Neo-Babylonian empire?

Lecture Twenty-Five

The Rise of the Persian Empire

Scope: Our knowledge of Persia, the greatest of all Near Eastern empires, is deeply colored by our sources, the vast majority of which are Greek and therefore focused on Greco-Persian relations. This leaves us ignorant of what happened throughout much of the rest of the Persian empire and paints a picture of the Persians that reflects Greek biases. But the Greek authors also provide a vivid narrative of those episodes in Persian history with which they were familiar. The Persians were part of the Iranian branch of the Indo-Europeans and emerged as the rulers of southwestern Iran after the Assyrians destroyed the Elamites. The founder of Persia was Cyrus the Great, who crushed the Medes in 550 B.C., gained control of western Anatolia and the Greek cities of Ionia in 547 B.C., and finally destroyed the Neo-Babylonian kingdom in 539 B.C. His son, Cambyses, rounded out Cyrus's achievement by conquering Egypt.

Outline

- I. Persia was the greatest of all the empires that ever arose in the ancient Near East. It encompassed more territory than any previous empire had, and more than any subsequent empire would until the rise of the Arab caliphate.
 - A. Only Alexander's empire rivaled its extent, but that empire barely outlasted Alexander's death. The Persian empire endured for two centuries.
 - B. Presiding over such a multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual realm for as long as they did, the Persians pioneered a singularly successful model for ruling diversity without tyrannizing it.
 - C. Our understanding of the history and character of the Persian empire is deeply colored by the nature of our sources for Persian history. Those sources are far less plentiful and are very different in nature from our sources for other Near Eastern empires.
 1. First of all, we have very little cuneiform material from the Persian period.
 2. Besides the small cuneiform collections, there are also several caches of papyri from Egypt that date to the Persian period.
 3. The epigraphic evidence is limited, too, both in quantity and scope.
 4. The Hebrew scriptures are another source. Judea was a subprovince of the Persian empire, so the Jewish texts deal with the Persians insofar as they involved themselves in Jewish affairs.
 - D. Greek authors provide our most abundant material on Persia.
 1. They give us rich, detailed, and often colorful narratives of Persian history, as well as vivid sketches of figures in Persian history.
 2. But the Greek authors' interests are specialized. They typically focus on Greco-Persian issues and on those parts of the Persian empire where Greeks came in contact with Persia, such as Anatolia and the eastern Mediterranean.
 3. Most importantly, Greek writers display a strong bias in writing about the Persians. They paint the Persians in morally unflattering terms to contrast them with the Greek self-image as manly, virtuous, and self-sufficient.
 - E. In stark contrast to the textual evidence, archeology has contributed much less to our understanding of Persia than it has both to other areas of the Near East and to the Greco-Roman world.
- II. The origins of the Persians are to be found in the great eastward migration of Indo-European speakers from their homeland in the vicinity of the Black Sea. The Persians belong to the Iranian branch of this migration.
 - A. The Iranians were cattle herders who gradually moved from central Asia into the Iranian plateau.
 - B. The Persians' ancestors settled in southwestern Iran, in Persis, the modern Fars.
 - C. The stage for the rise of Persia was set by the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal's destruction of Elam in 646 B.C.
- III. Another group of migrating Iranians closely related to the Persians settled in the northern and central Zagros Mountains, around Ecbatana (modern Hamadan), where they became the Medes.
 - A. The Medes first appear in Assyrian records in the 9th century, and they played an increasingly important role in the history of the Near East over the next three centuries.
 - B. The traditional view has been that the Medes created a regional empire that preceded the Persians', but lately this view has been strongly challenged. The challenge for historians is to ferret out the actual history of the Medes.
- IV. The creation of the Persian empire was the work of Cyrus II (*Kuruš*), whom history justly remembers as Cyrus the Great. In less than 30 years, he turned Persia from a peripheral Iranian principality into the greatest empire the Near East had yet known.
 - A. Inevitably, Cyrus's brilliant achievements led to the creation of legends about his birth and background.

- B. According to Cyrus's own testimony, he was the fourth generation of his family to sit on the throne of either Persia or Anshan.
 - C. The first step in Cyrus's creation of the Persian empire came in 550, with his destruction of the Median kingdom.
 - D. Cyrus next turned his attention to western Anatolia, where in 547, King Croesus of Lydia was attempting to capitalize on Cyrus's destruction of the Medes by enlarging his kingdom.
 - 1. When the Persians and Lydians met in battle, perhaps near the site of Hattusas, Croesus fought Cyrus to a draw.
 - 2. But the Persians were mountain folk and were used to winter weather, so Cyrus remained in the field and marched on Croesus's capital at Sardis.
 - 3. Cyrus laid siege to Sardis in the winter of 546. The city fell after two weeks, and with it the kingdom of Lydia came to an end.
 - E. Victorious over Lydia, Cyrus went on to subjugate the Greek city-states of Ionia, marking the first fateful encounter between Persia and the Greeks. This time, the Persians won.
 - F. Cyrus finally turned his attention to Babylonia. The Neo-Babylonians still controlled an empire that stretched from the Persian Gulf to Palestine.
 - 1. There are hints of fighting between the Neo-Babylonians and Persia prior to the final Persian attack, but Cyrus's invasion also reflected the geopolitical dynamics of the region.
 - 2. Babylonia also had been allied with Lydia, and Cyrus's conquest of Lydia may have been the pretext for the outbreak of hostilities.
 - 3. When Cyrus moved, he moved decisively. At the Battle of Opis in 539, he destroyed the Neo-Babylonian kingdom with one swift blow, slaughtering its army. The communities of Mesopotamia rushed to submit to him.
 - 4. Cyrus cast himself as the divinely sanctioned restorer of Babylonia.
 - 5. Cyrus's obliteration of the Neo-Babylonian army and government gave him control over territories that extended from the frontiers of Egypt to the Zagros foothills.
 - 6. He moved quickly to install people whom he trusted in control of Babylonia but avoided taking the royal title himself. Insofar as possible, he left local affairs in native hands.
 - G. After the fall of Babylon, Cyrus turned his attention to eastern Iran and central Asia.
 - H. Then in 530, Cyrus was killed while fighting the nomadic Massagetae, who lived in central Asia beyond the Jaxartes River.
 - I. Before his death, Cyrus had created a new capital for his empire, at Pasargadae.
- V. Cyrus's son Cambyses succeeded him on the throne.
- A. Cambyses continued the expansion of the empire by conquering Egypt.
 - B. Herodotus gives us a biased portrait of Cambyses, depicting him as a paranoid tyrant. The truth appears to have been different.

Suggested Reading:

Allen, *The Persian Empire*.

Brosius, *The Persians*.

Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. If we didn't have the Greeks' accounts of the Persian empire available to us, what would we know about Persia? What lessons do the Greek authors' treatment of the Persians give us regarding the way in which our picture of ancient (and modern) peoples is colored by the sources we use?
- 2. Was the Persian empire the creation of Cyrus's genius or of some deeper interplay of factors, either within Persia or within the Near East?

Lecture Twenty-Six

The Outbreak of the Greek Wars

Scope: Darius I put the finishing touches on the empire founded by Cyrus, conquering the Indus Valley, establishing a Persian bridgehead in the Balkans, and giving the administrative structure of the empire its definitive form. But a botched effort to expand Persian authority into the islands of the central Aegean led to a massive rebellion among Persia's Anatolian Greek subjects, who received token support from their relatives in Athens. After he crushed the Ionian revolt, Darius determined to neutralize the threat posed by the city-states of mainland Greece. His first expedition foundered in a storm. The second, aimed at Athens, was defeated at Marathon. Thus began the epic Persian confrontation with Greece, which continued, in one form or another, until Alexander's destruction of the Persian empire.

Outline

- I.** Among Persian monarchs, Darius I is second in importance only to Cyrus the Great. With him, the Achaemenid dynasty came to the throne it was to occupy until the end of the empire. With him, the Persian empire received its definitive shape and administrative structure. And with him, Persia's long and fatal confrontation with the Greeks began.
 - A.** Darius became king under highly questionable circumstances. This may be one reason why his accession was greeted by widespread revolts.
 1. Many of the rebellions were the usual efforts by subject Near Eastern peoples to exploit the moment of potential weakness represented by a royal transition.
 2. But there were also revolts in the Persian homeland, which suggests that there were larger doubts about Darius's claim to the throne and that fracture lines existed within the young Persian empire.
 3. Whatever the truth behind Darius's accession and the hostility that greeted it, he reacted swiftly and decisively against the challenge to his authority and crushed the revolts.
 - B.** Darius was the last Persian king to expand the empire, bringing it to its greatest extent. When he was done, it stretched from Libya and the Balkans in the west to Bactria (modern Afghanistan) and the borders of India in the east.
- II.** The advance into the Aegean islands proved fateful when, in 499 B.C., it sparked a rebellion among the Greek city-states of Ionia. This six-year-long Ionian revolt was the first spasm in a military and diplomatic confrontation with Greece that was to last off and on for the remainder of the Persian empire's history and would ultimately result in its destruction.
 - A.** The Ionian revolt sprang from a number of causes.
 1. The underlying cause was the Ionians' resentment of Persian rule. This grew out of the Greeks' distaste for Persian infringement of their beloved autonomy.
 2. The immediate cause of the revolt, according to Herodotus, was the failure of the Persian attack on the island polis of Naxos, in the central Aegean.
 - B.** The revolt began very successfully for the rebel cities, but its prospects dimmed when it failed to attract much support outside Ionia.
 1. The rebels began by overthrowing their Persian-backed tyrants.
 2. Then, in a surprise attack, rebel troops succeeded in capturing Sardis, the capital of the Persian satrapy in western Anatolia.
 3. The rebels sought aid from the city-states of the Greek mainland, but for the most part they were rebuffed.
 4. The Persians gathered their forces and launched a counteroffensive within a year.
 5. The climactic battle took place at sea, at Lade. The Persians won an overwhelming victory.
 6. The Persians initially punished the rebels with cold-blooded brutality. But after 493, the Persians adopted a more conciliatory approach.
 7. The final stage in the consolidation of Persian authority came after the Naxos revolt. In the north Aegean, Mardonius led a land-sea expedition along the coast to reaffirm Persian authority.
- III.** The participation of the mainland city-states Athens and Eretria in the Ionian revolt had shown the Persians that their northwestern frontier could never be secure so long as the city-states of mainland Greece remained unsubdued. The Greco-Persian Wars began as a Persian effort to neutralize the Greek threat to their western provinces and a Greek effort to neutralize the Persian threat to their autonomy.
 - A.** The wars pitted two antagonists against one another whose military and material resources were vastly different in scale, with the Persians enjoying an overwhelming advantage.
 1. The Persians possessed immense numerical superiority. They could draw on the manpower assets of an empire that extended from the Aegean and Egypt to India.

2. The Persians also possessed immense economic resources.
 3. Finally, the Persians possessed unity of command. That unity came from the fact that these vast resources were commanded and deployed by only one man: the Great King of Persia.
- B.** By contrast, any sensible person would have placed the Greeks at a decided disadvantage.
1. There was no unity among the Greeks at all. There was no kingdom or empire of Greece. The Greek world consisted of hundreds of completely independent little city-states, called poleis.
 2. Furthermore, Greece was poor. It had limited agricultural production and few mineral resources.
 3. The poleis of Greece also had small populations and therefore had limited pools of military manpower.
 4. But the poleis of Greece did possess important, though not readily apparent, strengths. Most notable of these was their commitment to the rule of law and the notion of citizenship.
 5. The Greeks also possessed military strengths that were not readily apparent but that allowed them to move with speed and agility.

IV. In 491, Darius began his bid to neutralize the Greek threat.

- A.** The Persians possessed considerable intelligence about the Greek world, obtained through Greek exiles and their own reconnaissance.
- B.** Additionally, Darius undertook a diplomatic offensive to exploit the Greeks' chronic disunity by winning the submission of as many poleis as possible.
- C.** In 490, Darius launched an expedition against Greece to punish the poleis that had defied him.
- D.** The Athenians', Spartans', and Eretrians' efforts to work out joint defense plans fell through and left them vulnerable to defeat.
- E.** The Greeks' intelligence gathering was poor to nonexistent, so the Persians were able to surprise them by island hopping across the central Aegean, rather than following the expected route along the Thracian coast.
- F.** After destroying Eretria, the Persians crossed over the straits between Euboea and Attica and landed at the nearby plain of Marathon, planning to march from there to Athens, about 25 miles away.
1. Marathon was an obvious landing spot for the Persians.
 2. The Athenians made no effort to oppose the Persians' landing but swiftly marched their heavy infantry to the edge of the plain, blocking the roads to Athens.
 3. For about a week, the two forces faced each other across a couple of miles of open ground, stalemated by their different tactical goals and by disputes within the Athenian command.
 4. The Athenians timed their attack carefully and altered the deployment of their phalanx to compensate for their inferior numbers.
 5. The fighting was bitter and prolonged. The Athenians finally defeated the Persians, but the Persians managed to evacuate their troops even as fighting raged on the landing beaches.
- G.** Round one in the Greek Wars had gone to the Greeks. Round two would soon begin.

Suggested Reading:

Allen, *The Persian Empire*.

Burn, *Persia and the Greeks*.

Green, *The Greco-Persian Wars*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you find the account of Darius's expedition against the Scythians credible? What were the logistical challenges that faced the Persian army on this expedition, if the account is accurate?
2. What were the relative advantages and disadvantages, political and military, that the Persians and the Greeks brought to their confrontation with one another? Did the Greeks enjoy a decisive advantage in this struggle? How might the Persians have neutralized the Greeks' strengths?

Lecture Twenty-Seven

Xerxes and the Invasion of Greece

Scope: Frustrated but undeterred by defeat at Marathon, Darius determined to renew his effort to subdue Greece but was distracted by revolts in Babylonia and Egypt. His successor, Xerxes, picked up the effort where Darius left off, and in 480 B.C. he led the most massive military expedition in all of antiquity against the 31 city-states that had refused his call for submission to Persian authority. Marching along the coast of the northern Aegean, Xerxes met the Greeks at Thermopylae, where the Greeks sought to delay the Persian land advance until their fleet could defeat the Persians at sea. In a hard-fought battle, the Spartan-led Greek force was overwhelmed, and Xerxes marched to Athens, which he destroyed. The Athenians had retreated to the nearby island of Salamis, however, and in an epic naval battle in the straits between Salamis and the mainland, they crushingly defeated Xerxes' navy. Xerxes returned to Asia but left behind a large land force to continue the fight the next year.

Outline

- I. Frustrated but undeterred by the repulse of his expeditionary force at Marathon, Darius I laid plans to attack Greece again, but he was unable to mount a second assault before his death.
 - A. An Athenian naval counteroffensive that tried to capitalize on the victory at Marathon sputtered out.
 - B. Meanwhile, in the summer of 486 B.C., a rebellion against Persian rule had broken out in Egypt.
- II. Darius's successor, Xerxes, was a conscientious ruler, but he was unable to match his father's achievements. Under his rule, the growth of the empire stagnated, and while he was able to hold it together, his efforts to put an end to the Greek menace led to a series of catastrophic defeats that left the empire weakened and vulnerable.
 - A. We are crippled in studying Xerxes' reign because of the unevenness of our source material. Virtually everything we know comes from Greek authors.
 - B. It appears that Xerxes' accession met with no opposition in Persia itself but was greeted by the customary rebellions in the provinces.
 1. Xerxes moved swiftly to snuff out the revolt that had broken out in Egypt before his father's death.
 2. The most dangerous rebellion to greet Xerxes' accession was in Babylon, next door to the Persian heartland. Xerxes dealt with the Babylonian rebels as harshly as he had dealt with the rebels in Egypt.
- III. Once he had crushed the rebellions in Egypt and Babylonia, Xerxes could give his full attention to the unresolved problem of Greece. To settle matters once and for all, he decided to hurl the full might of the Persian empire against the Greeks, in a massive invasion that he would lead in person.
 - A. He began his campaign shrewdly, with a diplomatic offensive aimed at isolating Athens and Sparta, the ringleaders of resistance to Persian authority.
 - B. The land and naval forces that Xerxes assembled for the invasion drew on all the resources of the Persian empire, as well as Persia's allies.
 - C. The Hellenic League's resources were much smaller than those of the Persians, and their preparations were clouded by unfavorable omens.
 1. The Greeks' most sacred oracles gave dire warnings of defeat, though they were couched in typically cryptic terms.
 2. As if that were not bad enough, the Greeks' preparations were marked by procrastination.
 3. When assembled, the allied army totaled about 110,000 men, mostly from the Peloponnese.
 4. The allies conferred supreme command on both land and sea on the Spartans; Themistocles was appointed to command Athens's fleet.
 - D. The Persians' and Greeks' strategies were very different.
 1. Xerxes' strategy was simple: to focus on the land war, where he could employ his overwhelming superiority in numbers.
 2. The Greeks' strategy was to defeat the Persians at sea, blocking their land advance in a location that would neutralize the Persian army's numerical advantage while the Greek navy tackled the Persian fleet.
 - E. In April of 480, Xerxes' army crossed the Hellespont. Its numbers made it unwieldy, and its advance was slow, dogged by the problems of supplying and moving so many men.
 - F. After they abandoned Thessaly, the allies fell back to the pass of Thermopylae in central Greece.

1. Thermopylae was a strategic chokepoint. By holding it, the allies could block the Persians' advance on land; meanwhile, the allied fleet engaged and defeated the Persians at sea, at Cape Artemisium off the northern tip of the island of Euboea.
 2. In late August, Xerxes moved south from Macedonia. It took him more than two weeks to move his huge army south through Thessaly. He arrived before Thermopylae in the second week of September.
- G. The Battle of Thermopylae has for good reason become history's paradigm of the last stand against long odds. The battle raged for three days but was actually an adjunct to the naval fighting at Artemisium.
1. Xerxes began the combat by sending in first-class Iranian troops, the Medes, telling them to take the Greeks alive and bring them to him, but the Greeks held them off.
 2. Next, hoping for a quick resolution, Xerxes committed the best troops in the Persian army, the elite Ten Thousand Immortals, but to no avail.
 3. Meanwhile at Cape Artemisium, the naval fighting was indecisive, although the allied fleet generally had the better of it tactically.
 4. The second day's battle was again inconclusive, both on land and at sea.
 5. On the third day, a local resident revealed the existence of the path around Thermopylae to Xerxes, who sent the Ten Thousand Immortals to flank the pass. The allied blocking detachment withdrew at their approach, and Sparta's King Leonidas, informed that he was being flanked, dismissed the bulk of the allied troops, remaining behind with a rear guard to cover their escape. Leonidas was killed shortly thereafter.
 6. Thermopylae and Artemisium were costly for both sides, but particularly for the Persians. The Persians lost 20,000 top-quality infantry and about half of their fleet to combat and to storms.
- H. After clearing the pass at Thermopylae, Xerxes advanced south, needing to finish off the Greeks before autumn settled in. The Persians had a massive numerical advantage, but as at Thermopylae, geography barred them from employing it fully.
- I. The Battle of Salamis took place at the end of September, probably on the 29th.
1. Xerxes' plan was to sweep down the channel between Salamis and the mainland like a tsunami, overwhelming the smaller, lower Greek vessels with his superior numbers of towering Phoenician and Egyptian triremes.
 2. The details of the battle are obscure, since Herodotus's account focuses more on singling out individuals for praise than on narrating the action. Aeschylus's play *Persians* helps, since he fought at Salamis, but difficulties still remain.
 3. The Persian front line numbered around 100 ships, tightly packed alongside one another. Together with the difficult configuration of the straits, this quickly caused problems for the Persian fleet.
 4. As the dense Persian formation began to loosen, the allied fleet moved forward to engage.
 5. The battle was joined, and it was fierce. The Persians' superior numbers proved to be their greatest handicap in the face of the Greeks' tactical skill.
 6. Although the allies won a clear victory over the Persian fleet, it was not a decisive victory. The Persian fleet's losses were not crippling, and it still possessed an overwhelming numerical superiority, but Xerxes chose not to renew the fight.
- J. Xerxes decided to withdraw before winter arrived. He returned to Asia with the fleet and much of the army, but he left behind a large force in Thessaly commanded by Mardonius. Persia may have lost a battle, but it had not yet lost the war.

Suggested Reading:

Allen, *The Persian Empire*.

Burn, *Persia and the Greeks*.

Green, *The Greco-Persian Wars*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses in Xerxes' strategy in the invasion of 480?
2. Salamis is often presented as one of the decisive battles of world history, sealing the defeat of Persia's effort to conquer Greece. Do you agree or disagree with that estimation? Did the Persians see it as dooming their invasion?
3. What should Xerxes have done to neutralize Greek interference in Persia's empire?

Lecture Twenty-Eight

From Plataea to the Peace of Callias

Scope: The Persians saw the defeat of their fleet at Salamis as a reverse, but not a decisive one. When Xerxes returned to Asia, he left behind a large force to renew the campaign to subjugate Greece. The Persian commander, Mardonius, launched a diplomatic offensive to try to break up the anti-Persian coalition, but to no avail. In the late summer of 479 B.C., the Persians and Greeks met in battle at Plataea. Although the battle was close until the end, the Greeks ultimately scored a crushing victory. In the wake of Plataea, an alliance of Greek city-states, led by Athens, launched a vigorous counteroffensive aimed at driving the Persians from Europe and liberating the Greek cities of Anatolia. The Persians were forced to abandon their satrapy in the Balkans and to surrender control over the coast of Ionia. But after they annihilated an Athenian expedition in Egypt, the Greek counteroffensive stalled, and Athens and Persia concluded an uneasy truce.

Outline

- I.** Undeterred by the reverse at Salamis, in 479 B.C., Persia prepared to renew its effort to subdue all of Greece. Xerxes' son-in-law, Mardonius, who had long experience of Greece and its affairs, was in overall command of Persian land and sea forces.
 - A.** Once again showing that the Persians appreciated the linkage between diplomacy and military operations, prior to the 479 campaigning season Mardonius launched another diplomatic offensive in the hope of exploiting the divisions that characterized Greek politics.
 1. In a stunning testimonial to Persian flexibility, Mardonius particularly focused on wooing Persia's arch-nemesis, Athens, whose defection would have cost the Greek allies the best and strongest units of their fleet, as well as the second-largest contingent in their army.
 2. The Athenians were no slouches at subtle diplomacy either. They made sure that news of Mardonius's peace overture was leaked to Sparta.
 - B.** In the early spring of 479, the Persians mustered their fleet at Samos, off the Ionian coast of Anatolia.
 - C.** Meanwhile, the allied fleet gathered at Aegina, under Spartan command.
 - D.** Unlike the Persian fleet, the Persian army in Greece had not been defeated by the Greeks, since Thermopylae was a Persian victory. The army was strong and of high quality, on the whole a better army than the one Xerxes had led in the previous year's campaign.
 - E.** The allied Greek army was under the command of Leonidas's nephew, Pausanias, who was the regent for Leonidas's young son. It was the largest army ever assembled by the Greeks, but its lack of cavalry constituted a serious weakness.
 - F.** Mardonius began military operations once it was clear that his efforts to separate the Athenians from the Greek alliance had failed.
- II.** The Battle of Plataea, coming almost exactly a year after Salamis, was one of the most decisive battles in history. Scholars debate many of its details, but all agree that it was hard fought and that its outcome was anything but certain. The Greeks very nearly lost.
 - A.** The basic problem confronting both Mardonius and Pausanias was how to lure their opponents onto ground favorable for their army's preferred tactics.
 - B.** The two armies faced each other for a couple of weeks, but prolonged inaction held dangers for both sides.
 1. For the allies, the danger lay in internal dissension, which was a Greek national trait.
 2. For Mardonius, the problems were logistical. He was no longer able to forward supplies to his army by sea and had to haul his supplies 100 miles over land from Thessaly.
 - C.** Forced to act, Mardonius finally broke the stalemate by unleashing his cavalry against the allies' supply lines. This interdiction campaign turned the logistical tables on the Greeks and forced them to move.
 - D.** Pausanias's effort to move his army quickly turned into a fiasco. Mardonius had brilliantly created this opportunity, and once it came, he seized it aggressively.
 1. Hoping to avoid exposing his troops to Persian attack, Pausanias ordered the allied army to withdraw at night, in the face of the enemy, which is the riskiest of all maneuvers in wartime. The predictable result came to pass: The Greek army became scattered and quickly lost its cohesion.
 2. Discovering that the allies had withdrawn, Mardonius assumed that they were in headlong flight and ordered an immediate pursuit. Here's where he blundered, by assuming that the Greeks were in flight rather than disorderly retreat. His overconfidence resulted in a disorderly pursuit that squandered his chance at a decisive victory.

3. Seeing the disorder in the Persian ranks, Pausanias ordered his Spartans and the Tegeans to charge. The Persians lost the advantage of their archery, and the battle was now fought on the Greeks' terms.
 4. The Persians successfully held off the Spartans attacking the camp until the Athenians showed up. The Athenians, who were good at such things, breached the palisade around the camp and then, together with the Spartans, poured in for the kill.
 - E. Far more so than Salamis, Plataea was a battle of epic importance. It marked the definitive end of Persia's efforts to conquer Greece; those efforts were never to be resumed.
- III. The disasters at Salamis in 480 and Plataea in 479 marked a watershed in Persian imperialism. Persia ceased to expand and henceforth adopted a defensive posture, concerned more with defending its empire than enlarging it.
- A. We have little information about what steps the Persians took following Plataea to defend their positions in the northern Aegean. The victorious Greeks formed an alliance, known as the Delian League, to defend Greece against any future Persian attacks and to liberate those Greek poleis under Persian rule.
 - B. The allies launched a counteroffensive against Persia in 478, under Spartan command, but although it was a great success, political intrigues soon brought it to a halt.
 - C. Under Cimon, a brilliant commander who was the son of Miltiades, the victor of Marathon, the league next launched an offensive against Persia's possessions throughout the Aegean. It quickly became a thinly veiled exercise in Athenian imperialism, not a campaign of liberation.
 - D. By the early 460s, Persia had reconstituted its fleet, but Cimon learned of it and led the league in a preemptive attack that dealt a shattering blow to Persia's power in the eastern Mediterranean, reminiscent of Mycale.
 - E. Following Persia's defeat at the Eurymedon, the league offensive against Persia gained momentum, and Persia's strategic position deteriorated rapidly.
 - F. Athens also actively aided rebels within the Persian empire, most notably in Egypt. But the Persians offered stiff resistance to Athens's offensive in the eastern Mediterranean, and Athens's adventure in Egypt ended in disaster.
 - G. After the destruction of the Athenian expeditionary force in Egypt, Persia went on the attack and soon recovered most of Cyprus.
 - H. Hostilities between Athens and Persia finally ended around 449, probably with an agreement now known as the Peace of Callias.

Suggested Reading:

Allen, *The Persian Empire*.

Burn, *Persia and the Greeks*.

Green, *The Greco-Persian Wars*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Did Greek command of the sea after Salamis play any role in the Plataea campaign? Was Salamis, in fact, the decisive battle in the Persian invasion of Greece, or was Plataea?
2. What could the Persians have done to defend themselves better against the Athenian counteroffensive after Plataea?
3. Was the Persian failure on the battlefield against the Greeks inevitable, or was it a matter of faulty tactics that gave the Greeks an advantage?

Lecture Twenty-Nine

The Persian Empire from 450 to 334

Scope: Once Athens turned its energies away from attacking Persia and toward building its own empire in Greece, Persia was able to consolidate its position in Anatolia and the eastern Mediterranean but was unable to regain the strength it had wielded before its disastrous invasion of Greece. The Persians realized that in order to safeguard their western provinces from Greek attacks, it was necessary to find more effective tools to use against the Greeks than military force. Those tools were diplomacy and the Persians' immense wealth, which they used adeptly, beginning with the closing years of the Peloponnesian War, when they subsidized Sparta. Afterward they shifted their resources between the Greek cities, keeping the Greeks at each other's throats and making the Great King the arbiter of Greek affairs. Then, in the middle of the 4th century B.C., Persia became distracted by internal problems, and a new and unexpected power united Greece under its banner, against Persia: Macedon.

Outline

- I.** Following its defeat in the war with Greece, Persia was in retreat until the middle of the 5th century B.C., but afterward, shrewd and capable rulers were able to restore the situation.
 - A.** Xerxes was assassinated in 465, the victim of a plot among his courtiers. The conspirators also murdered the crown prince, Darius, and placed one of Xerxes' other sons, Artaxerxes, also known as Artaxerxes, on the throne.
 - B.** Once he was more or less secure on the throne, Artaxerxes found himself facing significant threats to the empire's position in the eastern Mediterranean, most of them involving Persia's arch-enemy, Athens. But Artaxerxes was a capable ruler, and he eventually succeeded in stabilizing the situation.
 - C.** Despite the truce, tensions remained high between Athens and Persia into the 430s, with sporadic confrontations and clashes. Most of this had the nature of low-level friction around the peripheries of their empires and never flared into anything serious.
- II.** Persian power in the west revived at the end of the 5th century, as they skillfully exploited the most destructive example of the Greeks' penchant for internecine conflict: the lengthy and debilitating Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta.
 - A.** Darius II came to the throne following another orgy of dynastic bloodletting.
 - 1.** Artaxerxes was succeeded in 424 by his son Xerxes II, who reigned only 45 days before he was assassinated after a night of heavy drinking by a palace cabal led by his half-brother, Sogdianos, who then took the throne.
 - 2.** When Sogdianos demanded that Ochus, who was also his half-brother, come to Susa, Ochus raised an army and declared himself king, with the backing of senior military officers and the satrap of Egypt. He deposed and cruelly executed Sogdianos by gorging him with food and drink and then dropping him into an ash bin when he fell asleep. Sogdianos had been on the throne a little more than six months.
 - 3.** Darius II then eliminated all of the other conspirators who had murdered Xerxes, either by dropping them into ash bins too or just having them stoned.
 - B.** Darius II and the satraps of western Anatolia took advantage of the Peloponnesian War to recoup Persia's position in the Aegean and to gain leverage in Greek politics.
 - C.** In 407, Darius sent his younger son, Cyrus the Younger, to serve as viceroy in Anatolia, with the mission of supporting Sparta and pressing Persia's advantages. Cyrus forged a close alliance with the Spartan commander Lysander and provided lavish funds for Spartan use. This proved decisive for the Spartan victory.
- III.** Darius II was followed on the throne by his designated heir, Artaxerxes II. Although he came to the throne peacefully, the early years of his reign were clouded by the rebellion of his younger brother, Cyrus; a war with Persia's erstwhile ally, Sparta; and the successful secession of Egypt from the empire. Despite these problems, Persia was able to establish itself as the arbiter of Greece.
 - A.** Cyrus resented his brother's accession to the throne and is said to have plotted to assassinate Artaxerxes during his coronation. If so, he didn't follow through. However, in 403, back in Anatolia, he immediately began planning his rebellion. The resulting fight cost Cyrus his life.
 - B.** Even before Cyrus had begun his bid for the throne, Egypt had rebelled, in response to the turmoil on the Persian throne. The rebellion began in the Nile Delta in 405 and resulted in Egypt winning independence from Persia and maintaining that independence for the next 60 years.
 - C.** A war with Sparta in Anatolia arose out of Spartan bad faith. It broke out in 399 when Sparta reneged on the terms of its agreement with Persia during the Peloponnesian War. Persia would eventually emerge victorious.

- D. After the war with Sparta, Persia was able through the use of subsidies to manipulate the situation in Greece so as to keep the major poleis in conflict with one another, leaving its possessions in Anatolia secure.
 - E. When Athens showed signs of wanting to rebuild its empire, Persia switched sides and allied with Sparta. In 386, Persia brokered an end to the Corinthian War, the so-called King's Peace.
 - F. Following the King's Peace, Artaxerxes turned his attention to restoring Persia's position elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean.
 - G. Meanwhile, Greece remained locked in intercity conflict, which exhausted the poleis and prevented any threats to Persia but also made them turn to Persia as the arbiter of their feuds.
 - H. On the other side of the Aegean, the mid- to late 360s were marred by a series of satrapal rebellions in Persian Anatolia, which nearly led to the disintegration of the empire west of Mesopotamia.
 - 1. Virtually all the satraps of Anatolia were involved in the rebellions in one way or another.
 - 2. The satraps drew aid from hostile foreign sources, allying themselves with Athens, Sparta, or Egypt.
 - 3. Artaxerxes skillfully used treachery and the personal ambitions of key rebel leaders to suppress the rebellion.
 - 4. Royal authority had finally been restored in Anatolia by the time of Artaxerxes II's death in 359.
- IV. The Persian empire revived during the reign of Artaxerxes II's son, Artaxerxes III Ochus, but the effort of restoring royal authority distracted him from the Greek threat.
- A. Artaxerxes III came to the throne in a now-customary orgy of dynastic bloodshed. The youngest of Artaxerxes II's sons by the Great Queen Stateira, Ochus cold-bloodedly carved his way through his brothers to take the throne.
 - B. Soon after he came to the throne, Artaxerxes III had to contend with a renewed satrapal rebellion in Anatolia.
 - C. Artaxerxes III's most important accomplishment was the reconquest of Egypt, which was accompanied by the reassertion of royal authority in the Levant.
 - 1. He made his first effort against Egypt in 353, but it failed.
 - 2. The failure of the campaign in 353 sparked rebellions in Phoenicia and Cyprus, which were aided by Egypt. Artaxerxes swiftly suppressed the rebellions, but without undue brutality.
 - 3. The fate of Egypt was decided by Persian victory in an amphibious battle at Pelusium in 343. After Pelusium, the other fortresses in Egypt quickly surrendered, and the Nile once more belonged to Persia.
 - D. Artaxerxes III died in 338, along with most of his family, in a palace massacre engineered by the eunuch Bagoas. Bagoas later installed a distant royal relative, Darius III, to the throne.
 - E. Darius III was a capable ruler and a sound strategist, but he soon faced a challenge that few if any rulers, in any age, would have been able to master: Alexander the Great.

Suggested Reading:

Allen, *The Persian Empire*.

Cook, *The Persian Empire*.

Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. Did the Persian ability to dominate Greece by the use of diplomacy and subsidies indicate that this was a superior strategy for dealing with the Greek threat, compared to the one of conquest attempted by Darius and Xerxes? What were the advantages of the strategy of diplomacy and subsidies? What were its weaknesses?
- 2. What distracted Persia's attention from the Greek threat during the middle of the 4th century? Was there some weakness in the Persian system of government that impaired Persia's ability to deal with such distractions as well as with the necessity of heading off threats from Greece?

Lecture Thirty

The Government and Army of Persia

Scope: As was the case with all other Near Eastern empires, Persia was a monarchy, ruled by a king whose power was absolute. The Persian king was the earthly regent of the one god, Ahura Mazda, and was a great warrior as well as the guarantor of justice. The approach taken by the Persians to imperial administration was flexible, adapted to local circumstances. Darius I seems to have been the main architect of the administrative system, which was built around some 20 large provinces known as satrapies, in turn often subdivided into smaller administrative units. Local affairs were left in native hands. Persian systems of revenue administration and communication were highly sophisticated. The Persian army was as diverse as the empire's population but was built around a core of ethnic Iranian units. Its main combat arms were infantry and heavy cavalry; their primary weapon was the bow.

Outline

- I.** At the heart of the Persian empire stood the king, a figure whose qualities, like those of other Near Eastern monarchs, were carefully defined by a royal ideology.
 - A.** The Persian king was a divine-right monarch, the earthly regent of the one god, Ahura Mazda.
 - B.** Persian kingship was associated with the physical and moral qualities familiar from other Near Eastern royal ideologies.
 1. As part of his duties as defender against the forces of chaos, the Persian king was the divinely appointed guarantor of justice and the social order.
 2. Of course, the king possessed great physical prowess and outstanding skills as a warrior.
 - C.** The power of the king was absolute. His word was the source of all law.
 - D.** The king's surroundings were structured to emphasize his special power and position.
 1. Court ceremony was elaborate and designed to emphasize his majesty and power.
 2. He was secluded from his subjects, and access to him was tightly controlled.
 3. His appearance was magnificent: His dress and surroundings were opulent beyond anything permitted to any of his subjects.
 - E.** Legitimacy of descent was crucial to the legitimacy of the king's authority.
- II.** Darius I was the architect of the classic Persian system of imperial administration.
 - A.** Persian administration was distinguished by its flexibility, varying its practices according to local conditions.
 1. The Persians acknowledged and respected the diversity of languages, cultures, and political traditions among their subject peoples.
 2. The Persians do not even seem to have tried to impose close control on the normally troublesome nomadic peoples of their empire.
 3. The Persians' embrace of diversity also shows in the variety of languages and scripts that they used in their imperial administration.
 4. As early as Cyrus, the Persians understood the importance of adapting to the political traditions of conquered peoples in order to accommodate them to imperial rule.
 - B.** The geographical focus of Persian rule remained the Persian homeland in western and southwestern Iran.
 - C.** Since the king was the center of the empire, the focus of imperial administration was the royal court, but we actually know very little about its structure and organization.
 - D.** Herodotus is our main source for the provincial organization of the Persian empire. He tells us that Darius established the 20 large satrapies that formed the basis of subsequent Persian administration.
 - E.** Each satrapy had an administrative center that functioned as its capital.
 - F.** Because of their size, many satrapies were subdivided into smaller administrative units, but we know very little about them.
 - G.** Local affairs were left in local hands, and there was a high degree of local autonomy.
 - H.** The revenue system that the Persians developed for their empire was intelligent and efficient. The Persians are the ones who introduced money to the Near East.
 - I.** To link their sprawling empire together, the Persians built a sophisticated communications network.
 - J.** Darius's administrative and communications reforms greatly increased prosperity throughout the Persian empire.
 1. He improved agriculture by encouraging the introduction of new crops and diversifying the uses of existing ones.

2. He and his successors also expanded existing irrigation projects and built new ones.

III. The Persian army reflected both the vastness and the diversity of the empire it defended.

- A. This was the largest army ever mustered by a Near Eastern empire.
- B. Like every other Near Eastern army, the Persian army's organizational structure was based on decimal units.
- C. The core of the Persian army was its ethnic Iranian units. The elite corps was the Ten Thousand Immortals.
- D. To supplement the Iranian troops, there were contingents from all of the empire's subject peoples and allies.
- E. The cavalry formed an immensely important part of the Persian army. Chariots played only a minor role.
- F. Local defense in the satrapies was provided by regular troops posted in small garrisons around the countryside.
- G. The Persians created a system of military land grants that provided a ready reserve force that could be mobilized swiftly. Estates were granted to Persian nobles, with the nobles obliged to provide troops for royal service when summoned.
- H. During the last century of the empire's existence, mercenaries became a significant element in the Persian army.
- I. The Persian navy was always recruited from subject peoples. We hear of no native Persian squadrons. We have no information about Persian fleets in the Persian Gulf or the Indian Ocean.
- J. In assessing the effectiveness of the Persian army and navy, we should not confuse size with strength. The Persian military suffered from real weaknesses.
 1. Its recruitment from a multitude of ethnic groups must have made communications very difficult.
 2. Similarly, the bewildering array of ethnic tactical practices had to have complicated the effective deployment of the army.
 3. The worst deficiency, though, may have been a failure to adapt, to find a way to best the phalanx without simply copying it. Perhaps the Persian army suffered from a failure of institutional culture, a deeply ingrained conservatism of thought that in the end brought it down.

Suggested Reading:

Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*.

Cook, *The Persian Empire*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Did the Persian approach to ruling a culturally diverse empire resemble the approaches of certain previous Near Eastern empires? Which ones? How did it differ from the approaches of others? Which ones? What accounts for those similarities and differences?
2. How absolute was the Persian king's power in practice? Was the Persian empire sufficiently centralized to make his absolute authority effective?
3. Given its organization and equipment, what sort of tactics would have been most suitable for the Persian army? Did it employ those tactics against the Greeks?
4. What might the Persians have done to turn to their advantage the fact that they had a multilingual army equipped with a wide variety of weapons and used to a wide variety of fighting techniques?

Lecture Thirty-One

Alexander and the Fall of Persia

Scope: In the 330s B.C., the Persian empire emerged from a period of rebellion and turmoil on the throne, only to find itself confronted by what it had so long worked to avoid: a Greece united and hostile to Persia. The agent of unification—Philip, King of Macedon—was soon assassinated, but his son and successor, Alexander, proved to be an even more lethal menace. At the head of a well-balanced army of seasoned veterans, he launched an invasion of Anatolia, crushing the Persian army there and marching on to Syria, where he crushed a larger Persian force under King Darius III's personal command. The Levant fell to him, then Egypt. Finally, in a hard-fought battle at Arbela in the old Assyrian homeland, he crushed the last army Persia could muster. Darius fled the field and was assassinated by a Persian nobleman. Alexander assumed the throne as King of Kings, and the Persian empire came to an end.

Outline

- I.** Persia, the greatest empire the world had yet seen, fell in a mere four years under the onslaught of the small Balkan principality of Macedonia, led by its young king, Alexander.
 - A.** Alexander's assault on Persia was in many ways the final episode in the Greco-Persian Wars.
 1. Depressed and impoverished by generations of internecine warfare, many Greeks saw a national crusade against Persia as a way to end Greece's infighting and restore the Greek soul.
 2. The Greeks knew that such a war was feasible. The March of the Ten Thousand had shown that Greek armies could march deep into Asia and come back alive.
 3. Alexander's father, Philip II, had already made preparations for a war against Persia before he was assassinated in 336 B.C.
 - B.** But how was Macedonia able to do what no one had previously done and impose its domination on Greece? Why had Persia not taken steps to prevent Macedonia's rise, the way it had done with Sparta, Athens, and Thebes?
 1. One reason is that during the years when Macedonia rose from obscurity to the mastery of Greece, between 365 and 343, Persia had major problems of its own.
 2. The Egyptian and satrapal rebellions essentially cut Persia off from Greece during much of the mid-4th century, because they involved Persia's entire Mediterranean coastline, and that made it much more difficult for the Persians to gather intelligence and to conduct diplomacy in the Aegean.
 3. Effective action against Macedonia was also hampered by the bloody intrigues at the Persian court.
 4. It is also important to realize that prior to 350, no one would have believed that Macedonia could ever pose a threat to anyone, neither the poleis of Greece nor the Persian empire.
 - C.** Macedonia's rise from obscurity was due entirely to one thing: the genius of Philip II, who forged Macedonia into a major power in a mere 20 years.
 - D.** On the eve of their epic and fatal conflict, Macedonia and Persia seemed roughly balanced, at least on paper. Perhaps Macedonia's greatest advantage over Persia lay in the quality of their respective leadership.
 1. Royal authority within Persia itself was weak, thanks to decades of rebellion and repeated spasms of dynastic murder.
 2. In contrast, Macedonia had Alexander. Bold strategy was his forte; bold tactics were his trademark.
- II.** Alexander began his pursuit of empire in Anatolia in the spring of 334, where he met a spirited Persian defense.
 - A.** His army numbered nearly 40,000 Macedonian and Greek troops. The invasion army was the sort of combined-arms force his father had perfected.
 - B.** The Persian satraps were ready for Alexander's invasion. At the river Granicus, they met Alexander in a set-piece battle.
 1. The satraps' formation was faulty, with the cavalry on level ground behind the stream and the infantry in formation behind them.
 2. Alexander attacked, sending a squadron of light cavalry and one of heavy cavalry forward to secure the far bank of the stream while his infantry crossed.
 3. Persia lost 1,000 cavalry and almost all of its mercenary infantry at the Granicus; Alexander lost 90 Macedonians and an unspecified number of Greek allies.
 - C.** After the destruction of its Anatolian field army at the Granicus, Persia tried to slow Alexander's advance by using its naval superiority to cut his supply lines and by using its gold to cause trouble in Greece.
 - D.** But to counter Persia's naval superiority, Alexander adopted the novel strategy of defeating the Persian fleet by capturing its ports and marching down the Ionian coast, where the Greek cities welcomed him.

III. Late in 333, Alexander invaded Syria.

- A. Darius III had mustered a large army at Babylon and marched to northern Syria to defend the Levant.
- B. Darius III pulled off the remarkable feat of stealing a march on Alexander and got his troops behind Alexander's army as they marched down the coast. This forced Alexander to turn back to face the Persians, but it turned out that this worked to Alexander's advantage.
- C. Instead of pursuing Darius and the remnants of his army, Alexander turned south and conquered the Levant, completely stripping the Persian fleet of its ports.
- D. Darius tried both diplomacy and subversion to halt the Macedonian advance, but his efforts failed.
- E. After destroying Gaza, Alexander arrived at the borders of Egypt. The Persian satrap surrendered without a fight, and the population welcomed the Macedonian as a liberator.

IV. Darius braced for Alexander's next move, which clearly would be an attack on Mesopotamia. Everyone knew that not only the possession of Mesopotamia but the fate of the Achaemenid empire hinged on the outcome of the inevitable battle.

- A. Darius mustered a large army to defend the empire's heartland, but it was of much lower quality than the armies that had fought Alexander before.
- B. Alexander's army was slightly larger than the one he'd had at the Granicus and Issus, but it was still heavily outnumbered by the Persians.
- C. Darius chose a battlefield in northern Mesopotamia, at Gaugamela, the site of the old Assyrian city of Erbil. This would keep Alexander away from the densely populated parts of Babylonia.
- D. The battle took place on October 1, 331. Once more, Darius chose to receive Alexander's attack. Once more, Alexander forced Darius into retreat.

V. Gaugamela marked the end of organized Persian resistance. In the weeks that followed, the Achaemenid empire came to an end and the empire of Alexander rose in its place.

- A. Babylon surrendered to Alexander without a fight. Alexander assumed the title King of Babylon and was hailed as a liberator.
- B. In 330, he invaded the Persian homeland. The Persian capitals of Susa and Persepolis surrendered to him without a fight.
- C. Darius fled north to the Caspian Sea and then east toward Bactria, closely pursued by Alexander. On the way, he fell victim to a plot among his courtiers.
- D. Alexander then assumed the Persian kingship, and with that the history of the Persian empire came to an end.
- E. The swiftness and brilliance of Alexander's victory obscures the determination of the resistance that the Persian empire offered to him.
 - 1. Darius's defensive strategy was reasonable and well planned: to use Persian naval superiority to cut off Alexander from his European base and to use Persian wealth and diplomacy to destabilize Greece.
 - 2. We must also recognize that while Alexander won all his battles, in each of them the Persian army fought fiercely and bravely in defense of its king and its empire, especially at Gaugamela.
 - 3. The Persian nobility remained loyal to Darius until the very end.
- F. In the end, the solution to what one scholar described as "the enduring historical mystery"—how Alexander was able to destroy the mighty Persian empire—must be found in just three words: Alexander, the Great.

Suggested Reading:

Allen, *The Persian Empire*.

Cook, *The Persian Empire*.

Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. Should we attribute Alexander's conquest of the Persian empire solely to Alexander's own genius, or were there significant advantages that the Macedonians and Greeks brought to the conflict that brought about Persia's defeat? What might the Persians have done to stop Alexander that they failed to do?
- 2. How did Alexander's army differ from the Greek armies that Persia had faced in the 5th century? How did Persia's army differ from the army that it had brought to Greece in the 5th century?

Lecture Thirty-Two

The Origins of Carthage and Its Empire

Scope: Like the history of Persia, Carthage's history was written by its enemies. We have few Carthaginian inscriptions and no archives, but abundant writings from the Greeks, whom they fought in Sicily, and the Romans, who eventually destroyed them—writings that provide us with vivid but potentially partisan narratives. Archeology helps to fill in the gaps in those narratives. From it, we learn that Carthage was founded by Tyre around 800 B.C., near the end of a great wave of colonization that scattered Phoenician outposts throughout the western Mediterranean and down the coast of northwest Africa. Carthage seems to have remained under Tyrian authority until Tyre fell to the Neo-Babylonians in 573. Once independent, it moved swiftly to assert leadership over the other western Phoenician settlements. By the middle of the 5th century, it had established a thalassocracy that extended over western Sicily, the northwest coast of Africa, southern Spain, and the islands of the western Mediterranean.

Outline

- I. The fall of Persia left only one Near Eastern state standing: Carthage, the westernmost outpost of the Near East. Founded by Tyre during a great wave of Phoenician colonization in the middle of the 1st millennium B.C., Carthage forged for itself a thalassocracy in the western Mediterranean—the greatest naval empire the world had ever seen, and the greatest it was to see for the next 2,000 years.
 - A. In reconstructing the history of Carthage and its empire (which is called Punic, from the Latin for “Phoenician”), the available sources limit what we are able to know.
 1. The documentary sources for Carthaginian history and culture are very restricted, both in their nature and in their perspective.
 2. In the absence of Carthaginian sources, we are forced to rely on the ones provided by Carthage's rivals and enemies, the Greeks and Romans.
 - B. Archeology fills in some of the gaps in our knowledge, but there are the usual limits to what archeological evidence can tell us.
 1. The material remains recovered by archeologists can tell us that an object is present, or that something happened, but generally they cannot tell us how that object got there, or why that something happened.
 2. Furthermore, modern conditions often get in the way of exploring Carthaginian sites.
 3. But for all of its limitations, it is archeology that has provided us with most of our insights into Carthaginian history.
 - C. The fact that so much of what we know about Carthage comes either from archeology or from the writings of Carthage's opponents profoundly affects how we tell the story of Carthage and its empire.
 1. Our dependence on Greek and Roman authors, with their emphasis on narrative, means that the story of the rise and fall of Carthage's empire is long on storyline and short on the specifics of government and administration.
 2. Furthermore, since Greek and Roman texts reflect the interests of their authors and audiences, neither of which were Carthaginian, their accounts of the rise and fall of Carthage's empire tend to emphasize Punic relations with the Greeks and Romans at the expense of what was happening in other parts of Carthage's world.
- II. Carthage was one of dozens of colonies founded in the western Mediterranean by the cities of Phoenicia during the early 1st millennium.
 - A. Ancient writers differ regarding the dates of the colonization movement but tend to place it very early, several centuries before the Greek colonization of the rest of the Mediterranean.
 - B. Archeological research has made it clear that Phoenician colonization was a gradual process, that it began in the eastern Mediterranean, and that it arrived in the various parts of the western Mediterranean at most a century or two prior to the arrival of the Greeks.
 - C. Phoenician colonization had a commercial purpose. Settlements were established as bases to support merchant ships by controlling choke points in the Mediterranean and by serving as trading posts.
- III. Carthage was founded by Tyre and was given the Phoenician name Qart-Hadasht, meaning “new town.”
 - A. The dates given by ancient authors for the foundation of Carthage sprawl across several centuries. The archeological evidence suggests that Carthage was founded in the 8th century.
 - B. Carthage is the only Semitic city that has a foundation legend comparable to the foundation legends of Greek and Roman towns.

- C. For nearly three centuries after Carthage was founded, its ties with Tyre remained very close, both culturally and politically.
 - 1. Tyre controlled Carthage's government, sending out governors to run the city.
 - 2. Carthage annually sent a delegation back to Tyre to sacrifice at the temple of Melqart there. This sacrifice included the delivery of a tribute payment.

IV. The thalassocracy Carthage created embraced all of the Phoenician settlements of the western Mediterranean.

- A. Carthage's move to create an empire for itself probably grew out of a combination of its own commercial interests, together with events back home in Phoenicia.
 - 1. It was the largest and most prosperous of the Phoenician colonies in the western Mediterranean, the focal point of the most important trading network in the region.
 - 2. But Carthage was only able to build its empire once it became independent of Tyre. The decisive moment in the process seems to have come when Tyre fell to the Babylonian empire in 573, after a 13-year siege.
 - 3. As the largest and richest of their communities, Carthage took on the role of defender of the western Phoenicians.
- B. The history of Carthage's transition from leadership of the western Phoenicians to empire over them is obscure, thanks to our lack of sources. Most of its imperial expansion seems to have taken place between circa 550 and circa 450.
 - 1. The architects of the Carthaginian empire seem to have been the clan descended from an aristocrat named Mago. The Magonids dominated Carthage during the late 6th and 5th centuries.
 - 2. Close by the location of Carthage itself, the Phoenician settlements on Malta and in western Sicily came under its authority during the last half of the 6th century.
 - 3. Carthage got its first foothold in Sardinia by intervening to defend the Phoenician settlements there against the natives.
 - 4. Corsica fell to the Carthaginians after 535, when they defeated the Greeks at Alalia, in alliance with the Etruscans.
 - 5. While Carthage was establishing control in Sardinia and Corsica, the Balearic Islands were also becoming part of its thalassocracy.
 - 6. The Phoenician settlements along the coast of southern Spain probably came under Carthage's authority in the late 6th century also.
 - 7. The Phoenician outposts along the coastline of northwest Africa had been added to the empire by the early 5th century at the latest.
 - 8. Carthage also extended its authority to the east of Tunisia, along the coast of Tripolitania.
 - 9. It only extended its control into those interior territories, the hinterland of Carthage itself, during the mid-5th century.
- C. By the end of the 5th century, Carthage had established itself as the sole power in the western Mediterranean, ruler of the largest, richest, and most successful thalassocracy the ancient world was ever to know.

Suggested Reading:

Lancel, *Carthage*.

Picard and Picard, *The Life and Death of Carthage*.

Warmington, *Carthage*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. How does the fact that we know Carthage's history from the pens of its enemies affect our ability to understand Carthage objectively? What elements of the picture the Greeks and Romans give us of Carthage should we be suspicious of?
- 2. How did Carthage's acquisition of its empire differ from the way in which other Near Eastern empires acquired theirs? What were its motives? What means did it use?
- 3. Did Carthage attempt to expand its empire beyond the limits of Phoenician colonization in the western Mediterranean? Why or why not?

Lecture Thirty-Three

Ruling and Defending Carthage's Empire

Scope: Carthage became independent of Tyre in the early 6th century B.C. By the early 5th century, an oligarchy of major merchant families dominated the city. Its organs of government were the same as those of other ancient oligarchies, consisting of magistrates, a council, and an assembly, with the real power lying with the council. The first city-state to create an empire, Carthage took a relaxed approach to imperial rule, leaving its subject communities considerable autonomy; its weakness was that it won the obedience of its subjects but not their loyalties. To defend its empire, Carthage relied on mercenaries drawn from the western Mediterranean, which provided it with an army varied in weaponry, talents, and language, which complicated command and control. Carthage recruited these mercenaries as needed, which impaired its ability to respond swiftly to threats. Its navy was a citizen fleet, equipped with the latest models of warships and employing the sophisticated tactics typical of other seafaring peoples of the Mediterranean, such as the Greeks.

Outline

- I. The Carthaginian thalassocracy was the product of commerce, and commerce shaped both Carthage's own government and the administration of its empire.
 - A. For the first two centuries of its existence, Carthage was ruled by governors sent out each year from Tyre.
 - B. The tradition that claims that Carthage began its independent life as a monarchy makes sense, but the tradition also claims that its government went on to evolve along the lines of Sparta's or Rome's.
 1. We get our information from Aristotle, who had very definite ideas about the evolutionary patterns in city constitutions, ideas that might color his account of Carthage's constitutional history.
 2. The king's authority was carefully circumscribed. A king had military and religious duties but not the authority to take the city to war. There had to be a popular vote both authorizing the war and detailing the king's authority in conducting it.
 3. Under the monarchy, the administration of the city was handled by officials called *suffetes* (a Latinization of *shophets*, "judges").
 4. Monarchical Carthage also had a council, which probably consisted of the heads of the leading families and clans.
 - C. During the 4th century B.C., the monarchical model seems to have been discredited by Carthage's disappointments in its wars with the Sicilian Greeks, and that brought the monarchy to an end.
 - D. The postmonarchical constitution had three main branches: the magistrates, the council, and the people. They served both to counterbalance and to support one another.
- II. Carthage was the first city-state to create an empire, and its empire was more successful than that of any other city-state besides Rome.
 - A. The Carthaginian empire was both long-lived and unwarlike. After it cemented its control over the Phoenician settlements of the western Mediterranean, Carthage showed no interest in further expansion.
 - B. The Carthaginians took a laissez-faire attitude toward imperial rule. For the most part, all that Carthage asked of its subject communities was political loyalty and the regular payment of tribute.
 - C. The subject communities were grouped into several different categories, reflecting their different levels of civilization and the varying ways in which they had become subject to Carthage.
 - D. The central weakness of Carthage's administration of its imperial possessions was that it failed to foster any sense of shared belonging and identity among its non-Phoenician subjects. In other words, it made no effort to "Punicize" them.
- III. The army with which Carthage defended its empire was a mercenary force, but it was well-balanced and thoroughly professional, a multiethnic force that was highly flexible, able to employ a variety of weapons and tactics.
 - A. The army had originally been a citizen levy like the armies of most other city-states, but it turned to mercenaries during the late 6th century, when the empire was born, and as it expanded.
 - B. Carthage recruited its mercenaries from a broad spectrum of western Mediterranean peoples.
 1. The Libyans made up the largest contingent in the army.
 2. Mauretanian and Numidian mercenary cavalry were particularly important in the Carthaginian army.
 3. Spanish mercenaries served in Carthage's armies from the year 480 until the Second Punic War.
 4. Men from the Balearic Islands served as mercenary slingers.

5. Gauls first appeared in Carthaginian service in 340, but they were most common in Hannibal's Italian campaign.
6. In addition, Carthage also recruited Greek mercenaries, probably from the Sicilian poleis, who fought as hoplites in their customary phalanx.
- C. The elephant corps for which Carthage is famous was actually a minor element in the army.
- D. The army's senior commanders were almost always native Carthaginians.

IV. In contrast to the army, Carthage's navy was a citizen force.

- A. Being a mercantile state, Carthage had both a long seafaring tradition and a large seafaring element in its population.
- B. The navy consisted of three elements: warships, transports, and utility vessels.
- C. Naval battles mainly took place in coastal waters, where calmer seas made handling the slender, shallow-draught ships easier.
- D. Carthage rarely fielded all of its fleet at once. Much of it was kept in reserve for fiscal and commercial reasons.

V. Carthage's government and the structure of its mercenary army and citizen navy all reflected the commercial nature of its life and empire. But they were inadequate to the challenge posed by Rome.

- A. Its political and military institutions were very similar to those of its Greek neighbors.
- B. But if Carthage's political and military institutions were inadequate to the task of halting Rome, it must be said in its defense that nobody's political and military institutions proved adequate to that task. After the collapse of Carthage's empire, the Greek states of the eastern Mediterranean fell before the Roman advance like dominoes.
- C. Carthage was merely the first victim of what became the Roman Empire.

Suggested Reading:

Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*.

Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage*.

Picard and Picard, *The Life and Death of Carthage*.

Warmington, *Carthage*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Did Carthage's character as a commercial city predispose it toward an oligarchic form of government? Why would this have mitigated against its becoming a democracy or a monarchy?
2. How did Carthage's commercial character shape its approach to ruling its empire? Would a different approach have been more effective in cementing the empire together? Why or why not, and what different approach might Carthage have taken?
3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the sort of army that Carthage possessed?
4. Down through the First Punic War, Carthage routinely was defeated on land by its enemies, both Greek and Roman. What advantages did they have over Carthage? What did Carthage do to counter those advantages?

Lecture Thirty-Four

The First War with Rome

Scope: At the beginning of the early 3rd century B.C., Carthage was the sole great power in the western Mediterranean, but by 270, a second great power had emerged as Rome established its control over the Italian peninsula. There was only room for one great power in the confines of the western Mediterranean, and a confrontation between Carthage and Rome soon developed, sparked by Carthage's conflict with the Greeks of Sicily. Carthage and Rome both possessed important advantages, Rome on land and Carthage at sea. The First Punic War tested those advantages. Rome adapted to naval warfare and devised novel tactics that enabled it to best the more experienced Carthaginians at sea, though it suffered terrible losses to storms. Ultimately, the Carthaginians were able to stymie the Romans on land in Sicily. After more than 20 years of warfare, the two concluded a peace that cost Carthage its possessions in Sicily.

Outline

- I. Carthage's confrontation with Rome was the outgrowth of a centuries-long struggle with the Greek city of Syracuse over dominance in Sicily.
 - A. Arriving on the scene soon after the Phoenicians, the Greeks established hundreds of colonies in the western Mediterranean during their great colonial expansion in the 8th, 7th, and 6th centuries B.C. The area the Greeks colonized most intensively was southern Italy and Sicily, to which the Romans gave the name Magna Graecia, or Greater Greece.
 - B. By arriving first, the Phoenicians managed to frustrate further Greek colonization in some areas.
 - C. The first open conflict between Carthage and the Sicilian Greeks broke out the early 5th century. It culminated in 480 at the Battle of Himera.
 1. The generation of Greek tyrants who seized power in Sicily in the early 5th century posed a direct threat to the Punic position on the island.
 2. Carthage saw Xerxes' assault on Greece in 480 as a chance to neutralize the Greek threat to western Sicily.
 3. The Battle of Himera was a crushing military defeat for Carthage, but it did not do much to alter the strategic situation on the island.
 - D. For 70 years after Himera, there were little more than skirmishes between the two sides. Then, in the late 5th century, the Carthaginians resumed the offensive and were finally able to neutralize the power of Syracuse.
 1. Hostilities began when Carthage became embroiled in the intercity strife that broke out following Athens's disastrous attempt to crush Syracuse during the Peloponnesian War.
 2. Initial victories held out the hope that Carthage might be able to conquer all of Sicily, and for a time its prospects looked bright, until bad luck, in the form of a plague, struck its army and navy.
 3. Victorious but crippled by disease, Carthage dictated terms to Syracuse, terms that isolated and neutralized it but that it had no choice but to accept.
 - E. Syracuse struck back at Carthage in the early 4th century, but without much effect on the balance of power.
 - F. After the wars in the early 4th century, there were no more major conflicts on Sicily between Carthage and the Greeks, though occasional flare-ups continued down through the 4th century.
- II. Despite local challenges from the Greeks in Sicily, from the late 6th to the early 3rd century. Carthage remained the preeminent power in the western Mediterranean. But then a new power arose to challenge that preeminence: Rome.
 - A. The ultimate origin of the Punic wars lies in the geopolitics of the western Mediterranean.
 1. By the early 3rd century, Carthage's thalassocracy encompassed all the islands of the western Mediterranean and most of the coastal areas.
 2. But during the late 4th and early 3rd centuries, the city of Rome suddenly vaulted to control over the Italian peninsula, which elevated it to great power status too.
 3. The geopolitical problem caused by the rise of Rome was that in the confined space of the western Mediterranean, there was not enough room for two great powers to exist side by side. Sooner or later, conflict was inevitable.
 - B. Carthage and Rome each brought advantages to their confrontation.
 1. Carthage had the advantage of its dominance at sea and the professionalism of its navy and its mercenary army.
 2. Rome had the advantage of immense manpower resources. In simple terms, Roman soldiers were expendable, Carthaginian soldiers were not.

- III.** The clash between Carthage and Rome began very soon after Rome cemented its authority over southern Italy. A minor incident sparked the first of what would ultimately be three wars between the two powers. This First Punic War lasted 23 years, from 264 to 241, but it failed to resolve the basic geopolitical issue.
- A.** The immediate cause of the First Punic War was an internal dispute in the northeast Sicilian town of Messina (the modern Messina).
 - B.** The first two years of fighting centered around Roman efforts to establish control over eastern and central Sicily. It seesawed back and forth.
 - C.** In 261, Rome figured out that to defeat Carthage, it needed to build a navy. This shifted the main arena in the fighting to the sea.
 - D.** Frustrated with the stalemate in Sicily, in 256 the Romans decided to take the war to Africa, so they sent an army into Tunisia.
 - 1.** This led to a climactic naval battle at Ecnomus, when the Carthaginians intercepted the Roman invasion fleet off the southern coast of Sicily.
 - 2.** The Roman fleet sailed on and landed the troops south of Carthage, where they ravaged the countryside and settled in for the winter. But the Carthaginians called in foreign talent to help them repel the Roman invasion.
 - 3.** A Roman fleet of 210 ships was sent to Africa. It crushed the 200-ship Carthaginian fleet that stood in its way and rescued the remnant of the army in Africa, but on the voyage back to Italy, it was wrecked by a storm, losing hundreds of warships and transports and as many as 100,000 men.
 - 4.** Although a disaster to the Romans, the invasion of North Africa sparked widespread rebellions in Tunisia against the now-weakened Carthage, which Carthage suppressed once the Romans left.
 - E.** Following Rome's withdrawal from North Africa, the action shifted back to Sicily, where the fighting was savage but again inconclusive.
 - F.** In 247, Carthage appointed Hamilcar Barca to command in Sicily. Under his leadership, the Carthaginians took the initiative. Hamilcar established a fortified base near Panormus and used it to prosecute a mobile war of harassment against Rome in Sicily.
 - G.** The war finally ended after 23 years, when both parties had exhausted their resources.
 - H.** The terms of the peace represented a defeat for Carthage but did nothing to resolve the underlying geopolitical cause of the war.

Suggested Reading:

Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*.

Caven, *The Punic Wars*.

Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1.** Do you find the geopolitical interpretation of the underlying cause of the wars between Carthage and Rome persuasive? Why or why not? What role do you think geography plays in the relations between countries, and especially in conflicts?
- 2.** "Rome won the First Punic War because Rome was able to innovate and Carthage was not." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What role does national psychology (for want of a better term) play in conferring advantages on nations?

Lecture Thirty-Five

Hannibal and the Fall of Carthage

Scope: After the First Punic War, Carthage lost Sardinia and Corsica to Rome, thanks to a rebellion among its mercenary troops on the islands. In compensation, the Barca family led an aggressive expansion of Carthage's empire in Spain. The ultimate origins of the Second Punic War lay in the unresolved geopolitical issues that had caused the first, but the immediate causes were Roman claims that Carthage was impinging on its interests in Spain. Anticipating war, the brilliant Hannibal Barca led a Carthaginian army overland to Italy and inflicted a series of annihilating defeats on the Roman armies sent against him. Simultaneously, the Romans sent armies to Spain to destroy Carthage's empire there. Ultimately, the Romans were able to isolate and neutralize Hannibal in southern Italy and to drive the Carthaginians from Spain. Hannibal returned to Carthage when the Romans landed in North Africa and was defeated decisively at Zama. In the peace, Carthage was forced to surrender its empire.

Outline

- I. After the First Punic War, Carthage's empire teetered on the brink of collapse.
 - A. A massive rebellion erupted in 241 B.C. and lasted for four exhausting years, the so-called Truceless War.
 - B. Rome capitalized on the Truceless War to seize control of Sardinia and Corsica, which it then organized as another province of its new empire.
 - C. The Truceless War and Rome's seizure of Sardinia and Corsica produced a shakeup in Carthage's oligarchy and a restructuring of its empire.
 1. Hamilcar Barca's faction ousted the peace party led by Hanno and began rebuilding Carthage's strength in anticipation of a new war with Rome.
 2. The centerpiece of the Barcid program was the expansion of Carthage's territories in Spain.
 3. Accompanied by his young son, Hannibal, and his son-in-law, Hasdrubal, Hamilcar conquered southern and southeastern Spain before his death in 229.
 4. He was succeeded in command by his son-in-law, Hasdrubal, who expanded Carthage's territory north along the Spanish coast.
 5. Rome was concerned about Carthaginian expansion in Spain but was unable to do anything because of an invasion of Italy by Gallic tribes from the north. Instead, the Romans came to an agreement with Hasdrubal by which he agreed not to advance beyond the Ebro River.
 6. Then, in 221, Hasdrubal was assassinated. The Carthaginian army in Spain held an election and chose the 25-year-old Hannibal to succeed him in command.
- II. The Second Punic War was a very different proposition from the first one, thanks to the brilliant generalship of Hannibal Barca. The war earned him military immortality and nearly destroyed Rome, but in the end it was Carthage's empire that lay in ruins.
 - A. The underlying cause of the Second Punic War was still the geopolitics of the western Mediterranean.
 - B. The immediate cause was a dispute over the Spanish coastal town of Saguntum.
 - C. Each side intended to target the other's military and economic resources.
 1. The Roman plan was to conquer Carthaginian Spain and deprive Carthage of its resources.
 2. Hannibal's plan was to invade Italy, force Rome to fight on its own soil, and break up the alliance system that bound the communities of Italy to Rome.
 - D. Both sides moved quickly, and their armies passed one another in transit to their destinations.
 - E. Once he was in Italy, Hannibal immediately displayed his genius as a commander and dramatically reversed Carthage's history of defeat at the hands of Roman armies.
 1. His first battle was a victory over Roman cavalry at the Ticinus River near Pavia in November 218.
 2. Then, in late December, Hannibal crushed the combined forces of both Roman consuls at the Trebia River.
 3. Hannibal spent the winter in northern Italy, then in the spring of 217 marched south, crossed the Apennine Mountains, stole past a Roman army guarding the way, and ravaged Etruria. There, Hannibal met and destroyed another Roman army at Lake Trasimene.
 4. After Trasimene, the Romans appointed a dictator, Q. Fabius Maximus, who swiftly raised an army of four legions and pursued Hannibal but was careful not to meet him in battle.
 - F. Hannibal's greatest triumph, and Rome's greatest defeat, came in 216 at the Battle of Cannae.
 1. Hannibal had marched to southern Italy, where most of Rome's allied communities were located.

2. The two Roman consuls raised four new legions to join the four legions that had served under Fabius Maximus. Their army heavily outnumbered Hannibal's.
 3. The armies arrived near the town of Cannae and faced each other for several days, until looming supply shortages finally forced them into action.
 4. The Romans' battlefield dispositions were flawed. In contrast, Hannibal deployed his army so as to maximize its tactical flexibility.
 5. The battle proceeded almost exactly as Hannibal planned. The result, a masterpiece of battlefield tactics, was the annihilation of the largest army Rome had ever put in the field.
- G.** But strategic failures robbed Carthage of victory.
1. The flaw in Hannibal's crushing success at Cannae was that he failed to go on to take Rome itself, which would have ended the war.
 2. He also failed to seize any major port, which could have opened up supply lines to Africa.
 3. Instead, Rome retained command of the sea and could supply besieged ports with impunity.
- H.** Gradually, Carthage's hopes of victory dimmed as Rome defeated its allies and slowly reestablished control over Italy and its empire.
- I.** Meanwhile, the Carthaginians fought to hold off the Romans in Spain.
- J.** Back in Italy, Hannibal found himself first frustrated, then isolated. The Carthaginians tried to send reinforcements to Hannibal, but the Romans intercepted and destroyed them.
- K.** The war's final campaign took place in Tunisia.
1. Sailing from Sicily, Scipio landed a Roman army in Africa in 204.
 2. A peace faction of landowners and merchants in Carthage overthrew the Barcid party and asked Scipio for terms. He granted them.
 3. But Hannibal then returned from Italy with his troops and reinvigorated the war party, which undermined the peace.
 4. Late in 202, in Zama, Hannibal and Scipio finally met in battle. With two great generals facing one another, the result was a slugging match, which the Romans finally won.
 5. On Hannibal's advice, Carthage again sued for terms, which this time were much less generous.
 6. After Zama, Hannibal remained active in public life at Carthage for several years, but internal politics forced him into exile, and he committed suicide in 183.
- III.** After the destruction of its empire, Carthage prospered as a commercial city-state, but the fact that its treaty with Rome barred it from even defending itself eventually led to its destruction. The final act came in the Third Punic War.
- A.** The Numidians had capitalized on Carthage's defenselessness by encroaching on its remaining territory.
- B.** Carthage pleaded with Rome to defend it, or to allow it to defend itself, but the Senate turned a deaf ear.
- C.** Finally, in desperation, Carthage violated its peace with Rome and raised an army, which the Numidians destroyed. In response, Rome sent an army to Tunisia.
- D.** Carthage agreed to unconditional surrender, but when the consul commanding the Roman army ordered them to abandon the site of the city and move 10 miles inland, wrecking them as a commercial power, they resolved to fight.
- E.** Finally, Scipio Aemilianus took the city in seven days of fierce house-to-house combat. The city was completely demolished, and the entire population was sold into slavery.
- IV.** The fall of Carthage's empire had a simple cause: military defeat.
- A.** There were no signs of internal rot in the empire prior to the Punic Wars.
- B.** Carthage's one weakness was its military. Carthage never succeeded in creating an army equal to the armies of its enemies.

Suggested Reading:

Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*.

Caven, *The Punic Wars*.

Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Given that his army was the same as previous Carthaginian armies and that Roman armies had not changed either, what advantages did Hannibal have over the Romans that enabled him to defeat them on the battlefield, where previous Carthaginian generals had consistently suffered defeats?
2. What might Hannibal have done differently to turn his tactical success on the battlefield into strategic success by defeating Rome decisively in Italy?
3. What enabled Rome finally to defeat Carthage?

Lecture Thirty-Six

Ancient Empires before Alexander, and After

Scope: The two millennia between the rise of Sargon and the fall of Hannibal saw a dozen empires come and go on the stage of the ancient Near East. They were strikingly diverse in their origins, in their approach to imperial rule, in their extent, and in their longevity—a diversity that reflects their varied environments, historical circumstances, and cultures. They anticipated much that was to come in the empires of later ages. This was particularly true in imperial administration; we find Near Eastern elements both in the empires of Alexander’s successors and in Rome. It is also true in military organization; the Assyrian army set the standard for the Persians, and through them for the Parthians and Sassanids, and for the heavy cavalry of Rome, which in turn inspired the armored knights of medieval Europe. But the most enduring legacy may be the idea of empire itself, which has endured and still endures to the present day.

Outline

- I. What have we learned about this grand but elusive thing called empire? Given the sheer number of them that we have explored and the span of time and space they occupied, it comes as no wonder that the first thing about these empires that grabs our attention is their diversity.
 - A. They came in all sizes. Even by modern standards, some of them were huge. But others were modest in size, even small.
 - B. Some were by land; some were by sea.
 - C. Some of these empires were created by great conquerors, while others were painstakingly assembled by generations of leaders who were often just as capable.
 - D. The motives that lay behind the creation of these empires have proven to be as diverse as the empires themselves.
 1. In several cases the motives are pretty clear. Carthage’s empire, for example, came into being because of its commercial concerns.
 2. But what motivated the conquest of other empires is pretty much a mystery. For instance, we have no idea what lay behind the formation of Mitanni or Kassite Babylonia.
 3. But much of the time it looks as though the driving force lay within the psyches of individual conquerors—the dream of empire.
 - E. These empires’ forms of government were as diverse as the impulses that led to their creation. Some were tightly centralized tyrannies; others were loosely knit webs of vassals.
 - F. The empires had very diverse life spans, too: Some seemed to last little longer than a dusting of spring snow; others endured for centuries.
 - G. And finally, the ends of these empires were as diverse as everything else about them. Some were laid low by the sudden onslaught of unforeseen enemies, while others, weak and feeble, collapsed in the face of rebellion or attack.
- II. As diverse as these empires were, there are common threads that link them together.
 - A. The Near Eastern ones had “royal ideologies,” and those royal ideologies had strikingly similar features.
 1. At the top of the list was the association of kingship with the qualities of a warrior.
 2. In all of the royal ideologies, the king was also the guarantor of justice, and especially of social justice.
 3. We have seen that religion was central to Near Eastern kingship. The royal ideologies universally espoused what we today would call “divine-right monarchy.” But as we have seen, the kings were almost never regarded as gods themselves.
 4. Although Near Eastern kings were not gods, royal ideologies often regarded them as superhumanly wise.
 5. Finally, Near Eastern royal ideology saw the king as the great bulwark standing between order and chaos.
 - B. Another common thread was the instability of royal power. Violence ran through the internal politics of many of these empires like a river of blood.
 - C. In their political cultures, we can detect a sharp divergence between the empires centered in the great river valleys and the ones outside.
 1. The empires of Mesopotamia looked back to Sargon as their model and lavished immense resources on maintaining the cultural traditions of the past, to exhibit a degree of continuity in their political culture.
 2. Elsewhere, political authority was typically much less centralized.
 - D. Regardless of their political culture, stability eluded the empires of the ancient Near East. Very few ever solved the problem of how to maintain loyalty and order among the subject peoples of their empires.

- III. In their military institutions, our empires exhibit more similarity than diversity.
- A. They typically consisted of a mix of professional, full-time troops and native levies.
 - B. The empires' armies were strongly conservative. They avoided innovation.
- IV. We said at the beginning of the course that the empires that rose and fell across the ancient world during the 2,000 years before Alexander blazed trails that he and future conquerors would tread. So how much did the conquerors of the Greek and Roman world consciously borrow from their Near Eastern predecessors?
- A. Alexander probably borrowed more from his Near Eastern predecessors than any subsequent rulers did.
 - 1. He presented himself to his various subject peoples in ways that were familiar to them.
 - 2. He borrowed much, including ceremonial rites and administrative practices, from the Persians.
 - B. When Alexander's generals carved up his empire and set themselves up as kings, they were more sparing in taking on Near Eastern elements.
 - C. The Romans borrowed even less from the Near Eastern imperial past than did Alexander and the Hellenistic kings.
 - D. Cultural factors may explain why the Greeks and Romans borrowed so little from the empires that went before them.
 - 1. First of all, the Greeks do not seem to have known very much about the ancient Near East.
 - 2. After their victory in the Persian Wars, the Greeks formed a stereotype of corrupt "Oriental" despotism that mitigated against Hellenistic monarchs borrowing from their Near Eastern predecessors.
 - 3. The Romans then inherited the Greeks' stereotypes about the East.
 - E. The main inheritors of the great imperial tradition that preceded Alexander were the empires that arose in the Near East during and after the collapse of the Hellenistic kingdoms founded by his successors.
 - F. What the West retained was an image of the East as alien and threatening—a source of menace and the home of despotism, not the birthplace of civilization and the cradle of empire.
- V. It is time to offer a final reflection on the question we posed at the beginning of the course: Why should we study the ancient empires that came before Alexander?
- A. It is not because of the impact that they had on our world as empires. The ancient Near East has given us a great deal, including civilization itself, but its great empires were all but forgotten, all the way from antiquity down to the 19th century A.D.
 - B. But maybe there is one thing that the empires of the ancient Near East gave us that does descend in a direct and unbroken line all the way from antiquity to the present day, even if we have forgotten where it comes from. That one thing is the dream of empire.
 - 1. It was in the ancient Near East that this grandiose dream, which has driven so many conquerors across so many millennia, was born: the dream of a power that spans the world.
 - 2. The dream came to Greece in the vision of Alexander, then traveled to Rome, where it found its name: *imperium*.
 - 3. In the Middle Ages, it inspired Charlemagne, Otto, and Henry II.
 - 4. In the modern world, empires that truly did span the world finally came into being, but while those empires have passed into history, the dream that gave them birth has not.

Suggested Reading:

Bowman, *Egypt After the Pharaohs*.

Brosius, *The Persians*.

Green, *Alexander to Actium*.

Millar, *The Roman Near East*.

Questions to Consider:

1. "The more things change, the more they stay the same." How relevant is this observation to the relationship between the empires of the ancient Near East and the ones that followed?
2. What similarities do you find between the empires of the ancient Near East and other empires with which you are familiar, whether ancient, medieval, or modern?
3. Is empire an unavoidable fact of human political life? Why or why not?

Timeline

All dates are before the common era (B.C.).

c. 2334–2278	Reign of Sargon, creator of history's first empire, Akkad (or Agade).
2255–2218	Sargon's grandson, Naram-Sin, conquers states along the Persian Gulf as far as Oman and campaigns into Armenia.
2217–2193	Akkadian empire disintegrates under Sharkalisharri; Gutians seize much of Mesopotamia.
c. 2119–2112	Utuhegal of Uruk expels the Gutians.
2112–2047	Ur-Nammu defeats Utuhegal, founds Third Dynasty of Ur (Ur III), and conquers all of Mesopotamia. He and his son Shulgi create a strongly centralized state.
2028–2004	Ur III empire collapses under Ibbi-Sin.
c. 2000	Ashur becomes an independent city-state after collapse of Ur III empire, develops network of merchant colonies in Anatolia; first great palaces appear on Crete; Greeks conquer the Balkan peninsula; Hurrians settle throughout northern Mesopotamia.
c. 2000–1770	Mesopotamia reverts to a patchwork of city-states; Isin and Larsa compete for supremacy.
c. 1808–1776	Shamshi-Adad creates short-lived kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia, centered on Ashur.
c. 1800–1750	Pitkhana and Anitta of Kussara create kingdom in central Anatolia that Hittite rulers view as ancestral.
c. 1800–1450	Period of supposed Minoan naval empire (thalassocracy) in Aegean.
1792–1750	Reign of Hammurabi.
c. 1765–1755	Hammurabi conquers Mesopotamia.
c. 1760	Ashur becomes a vassal state of Hammurabi's empire.
c. 1730–1670	Hammurabi's empire disintegrates following his death.
c. 1650–1620	Hattusilis I of Kussara founds the Hittite Old Kingdom by conquering central and southern Anatolia.
c. 1650–1500	Hittite Old Kingdom.
c. 1640	Massive eruption of the volcanic island of Thera, north of Crete; substantial damage is done to the palaces on the island, but they are rebuilt.
c. 1630–1600	Founding of Mycenae; Mycenaeans take a leading role in Aegean trade.
1620–1590	Reign of Hittite king Mursilis I, who conquers northern Syria.
c. 1620–1580	Hittite sources report Hurrian attacks on eastern Hittite kingdom.
16 th century	Emergence of the Kassite kingdom in Babylonia.
1595	Mursilis I sacks Babylon.
c. 1590–1550	Hurrian kingdom of Mitanni emerges in the power vacuum in northern Mesopotamia.
c. 1590–1525	After Mursilis I's assassination, Hittite kingdom falls into chaos and contracts into central Anatolia.
c. 1550–1450	Merchant princes of Grave Circles B and A rule from the great palace of Mycenae; other ancient dynasties of Mycenaean Greece founded.

c. 1530	Ahmosé founds Egypt's Dynasty 18 and drives Hyksos from Lower Egypt, conquering southern Palestine.
c. 1530–1525	Ahmosé advances Egyptian frontier into Nubia, to second cataract of the Nile.
c. 1525	Telepinus becomes king of the Hittites and restores order, but the Hittite realm remains weak for another century.
1525–1504	Reign of Amenhotep I, who expands Egyptian control 100 miles deeper into Nubia.
c. 1500	Ashur briefly conquered by Mitanni; Thutmose I advances Egyptian frontier to third cataract of the Nile.
c. 1495	Thutmose I leads an Egyptian army to the Euphrates and expands the empire into central Palestine.
1479–1425	Thutmose III conducts 33 Levant campaigns, conquering northern Palestine and southern Syria.
1457	Battle of Megiddo; Thutmose III defeats coalition of Mitanni vassals.
c. 1450	Wave of destruction sweeps Crete; Minoan civilization ends. Mainland Greeks take over the island and palaces, colonize the Aegean.
c. 1450–1350	Tholos-Tomb Dynasty rules from the great palace at Mycenae.
c. 1430–c. 1410	Tudhaliyas II founds Hittite New Kingdom and expands Hittite frontiers into eastern and western Anatolia, as well as northern Syria, but after his death, the kingdom again lapses into chaos.
1427–1400	Reign of Amenhotep II. Egypt and Mitanni fight to a standstill in their contest for control of Syria.
c. 1410	The Gasga of northern Anatolia sack Hittite capital of Hattusas; "Atarissiya, the man of Ahhiyava" raids Cyprus in alliance with the Hittite renegade Madduwatta.
c. 1395	Increasingly alarmed by the rise of Hittite power, Mitanni and Egypt make peace. (Syrian frontier remains quiet until the late 14 th century.)
c. 1370–c. 1330.....	Suppiluliumas I aggressively expands Hittite empire, conquering northern Syria and crushing Mitanni.
c. 1350	Dynastic civil war in Mitanni following defeat at the hands of Suppiluliumas I.
after 1350.....	Assyria begins its rise to power in vacuum left by Mitanni's defeat.
c. 1354–934	Middle Assyrian empire.
c. 1350–1300	Signs of rising insecurity in Greece; merchant princes give way to warrior hero dynasties; massively fortified citadels replace many earlier palaces; Mycenaean trade empire shrinks.
c. 1330	Ashur-uballit of Assyria briefly places an Assyrian puppet on the throne of Kassite Babylonia; Mitanni is reduced to a vassal principality of Hittite empire.
c. 1330–c. 1295.....	Hittite Mursilis II conquers Arzawa in western Anatolia, suppresses rebellions in northern Syria, and temporarily subdues the Gasga.
c. 1325	Mursilis II crushes an Egyptian army at Amki, near Kadesh in southern Syria.
c. 1320–1295	Massive rebellion among Syrian and Palestinian vassals nearly destroys the Egyptian empire in the Levant.
c. 1295–c. 1271.....	Muwatallis II expands Hittite control in Syria.

1295–1264	Adad-Nirari I expands Assyrian power into northern Syria and pushes the Kassites back into central Mesopotamia.
1294–1279	Pharaoh Sety I suppresses rebellion in the Levant but fights an inconclusive war with Muwatallis for control of southern Syria and the key fortress of Kadesh.
c. 1285	For the first time, Egypt is attacked from the west; Sety I defeats the Libyan incursion.
c. 1280	Muwatallis II abandons Hattusas as the Hittite capital in the face of incessant Gasga raids.
1279–1213	Reign of Ramesses II.
1278	Sea Peoples attack Egypt for the first time.
1274	Battle of Kadesh, a tactical victory for the Egyptians but a strategic one for the Hittites, who push their control south to Damascus.
1271–1270	Ramesses II campaigns in Syria to regain territory lost after Kadesh.
c. 1265	Hittite power weakened by dynastic civil war.
c. 1264–c. 1240	Under Hattusilis III, Hittites' peripheral territories begin to fall away.
1258	Hattusilis III concludes formal peace treaty with Ramesses II.
mid-13 th century	Final collapse of the Mycenaean trade empire. Pottery exports from Greece cease soon after 1250.
c. 1250–c. 1230	The Trojan War.
c. 1240–c. 1210	Hittite disintegration accelerates under Tudhaliyas IV; Assyrian Tikulti-Ninurta I conquers eastern Anatolia; western Anatolia falls away.
c. 1230	Elamites devastate Kassite Babylonia.
1225	Tikulti-Ninurta I deposes Kassite king Kashtiliash IV and installs an Assyrian puppet in Babylon.
c. 1220	The Exodus.
c. 1220–c. 1180	Mycenaean civilization collapses violently. Waves of destruction sweep the citadels on the mainland and the palaces of Crete.
c. 1210	Libyans instigate a rebellion against Egypt in Kush; Israelites settle in Canaan.
1207	Second, massive attack on Egypt by the Sea Peoples, coming through the Levant; Merneptah crushes them and campaigns in Palestine against Israel.
1203–1184	Dynastic chaos in Egypt following Merneptah's death.
c. 1200	Hittite empire vanishes.
c. 1200–c. 1180	Waves of destruction sweep over coastal zone of the Levant.
c. 1200–1030	"Judges" rule the autonomous Israelite clans in Canaanite hill country.
early 12 th century	Elam expels Assyrian puppet king from Babylon; brief Kassite resurgence.
1197	Tikulti-Ninurta I is assassinated; Assyria falls into chaos for a century and loses most of its conquests.
1179	Massive Libyan attack on Lower Egypt, defeated by Ramesses III.
1176	Third and greatest attack of the Sea Peoples on Egypt. Ramesses III decisively defeats them in the Nile Delta, and they vanish from history.

c. 1175	Ramesses III settles the Philistines on the southern coast of Canaan.
1173	Final Libyan attack on Egypt, defeated by Ramesses III.
1155	Elamites invade Babylonia and destroy the Kassite kingdom.
c. 1150–1140	Egypt loses the last remnants of its empire in the Levant.
1125–1103	Nebuchadrezzar I of Isin destroys the Elamite kingdom.
1114–1076	Under Tiglath-pileser I, Assyria begins its recovery; he sacks Babylon and campaigns as far west as Phoenicia.
c. 1080	Egypt loses control of Nubia and retreats to the first Nile cataract; the Egyptian empire is finished.
c. 1030	Philistines begin to expand into the interior of Canaan, putting pressure on the Israelite clans of the hill country.
c. 1025–1000	Uniting against the Philistines, the Israelite clans anoint Saul as the first king of Israel.
late 11 th century.....	Egypt disintegrates into feuding principalities.
c. 1000–960	David becomes king of Israel following Saul's death. He expands his power east of the Jordan River and north of Damascus.
c. 960–920	Solomon reigns as king of Israel.
c. 945	Solomon begins construction of the Temple.
934–612	Neo-Assyrian empire.
c. 920	Northern clans of Israel reject Solomon's son Rehoboam and anoint Jeroboam as their king; Israel disintegrates into northern (Israel) and southern (Judah) kingdoms.
883–859	Under Ashurnasirpal II, Assyria becomes a great power once more.
858–824	Shalmaneser III cements Assyrian authority in the Levant.
c. 850–c. 600.....	Phoenician colonization of the western Mediterranean.
823–745	Internal unrest weakens Assyria.
c. 800	Carthage is founded by Tyre.
8 th –early 6 th centuries.....	Medes dominate western Iran.
744–727	Tiglath-pileser III reasserts Assyrian power in the Levant, defeats the Caucasus kingdom of Urartu, and annexes Babylonia.
744–630	Zenith of the Assyrian empire.
722	Shalmaneser V conquers the kingdom of Israel.
721–705	Sargon II expands Assyrian power into southeastern Anatolia.
705	Sargon II dies in battle with the Cimmerians.
704–681	Rebellions greet the accession of Sennacherib; he fights all his reign to maintain Assyria's frontiers and to maintain control of Babylonia.
681	Sennacherib assassinated.
680–669	After putting down rebellions following his accession, Esarhaddon defends Assyria's northern frontier against Scythian and Cimmerian attacks.
678	Esarhaddon launches Assyrian conquest of Egypt.
673	Egyptians defeat Assyrian invasion.

671	Assyrians besiege and capture the Egyptian capital of Memphis; Lower Egypt falls to Assyria.
669–668	Following Esarhaddon's death, Egyptians expel Assyrians from Lower Egypt.
667	Ashurbanipal regains control over Lower Egypt and installs an Egyptian puppet ruler as his vassal.
664–663	Ashurbanipal returns to Egypt to put down rebellions, capturing Thebes and taking control of Upper Egypt.
656	Assyria's puppet king in Egypt, Psammetichus I, declares himself independent of Assyria. Assyria loses control over Egypt.
652–648	Ashurbanipal's brother, Shamash-shum-ukin, viceroy of Babylonia, rebels; it takes four years to suppress the revolt.
648–646	Ashurbanipal devastates Elam in punishment for its support of Shamash-shum-ukin's rebellion; Elam never recovers from this blow.
c. 645	After its king is defeated and killed by the Cimmerians, the kingdom of Lydia submits to Assyria as a vassal.
late 7 th century	Under Teispes, a Persian dynasty establishes itself in the former territory of Elam.
c. 630	Death of Ashurbanipal.
627	Kandalanu, Assyrian ruler of Babylonia, dies.
626	Nabopolassar takes power in Babylonia; it takes him 10 years to expel the Assyrians. He founds the Neo-Babylonian empire.
616	Nabopolassar invades the Assyrian heartland.
612	Aided by the Medes, Nabopolassar captures Ashur and Nineveh, destroying the Assyrian empire.
608	Nabopolassar destroys last Assyrian outpost at Harran in eastern Syria.
605	Nebuchadrezzar defeats the Egyptians at Carchemish, driving them out of the Levant and annexing it to the Neo-Babylonian empire.
601	Nebuchadrezzar defeated when he attempts to invade Egypt.
597	Nebuchadrezzar takes Jerusalem and plunders the Temple following a rebellion against Neo-Babylonian authority. He deposes king Jehoiachin and places Zedekiah on the throne.
591	Psammetichus II of Egypt invades the Levant. King Zedekiah of Judah rebels against Nebuchadrezzar.
587	Nebuchadrezzar drives the Egyptians from the Levant and besieges Jerusalem.
586	Jerusalem falls to Nebuchadrezzar. The Temple is destroyed, and thousands are deported to Babylonia, beginning the Babylonian Captivity.
584–573	Nebuchadrezzar besieges and ultimately captures Tyre; with the fall of Tyre, Carthage becomes independent.
after 573	Carthage establishes control over the Phoenician settlements of the western Mediterranean.
570	Neo-Babylonians are defeated again in an attempt to invade Egypt. A border is agreed upon.
562–556	Dynastic chaos in Babylonia following Nebuchadrezzar's death.

559	Cyrus becomes king of Persis/Anshan.
555–539	Reign of Nabonidus in Babylonia.
553–543	Nabonidus removes himself from Babylonia, taking up residence at Teima in northern Arabia. His son Belshazzar rules Babylonia as viceroy.
550	Cyrus destroys and annexes the Median kingdom.
546	Cyrus conquers Sardis and annexes the kingdom of Lydia, giving Persia control of Anatolia.
539	Cyrus crushes the Neo-Babylonian army at Opis, ending the empire.
535	Carthage defeats the western Greeks at Alalia, off Corsica, establishing itself as defender of the Phoenician communities against Greek aggression.
530	Cyrus dies in battle with the Massagetae.
526–525	Cyrus's successor, Cambyses, conquers Egypt.
522	Cambyses dies under suspicious circumstances. Darius I succeeds him as king of Persia.
522–520	Widespread rebellions greet Darius's accession.
513–512	Darius launches an expedition into the Ukraine against the Scythians. It fails, but he retains a Persian foothold in Europe.
509	Carthage concludes a trade treaty with Rome after Rome expels its Etruscan kings.
499	Ionian revolt breaks out, beginning the Greco-Persian wars.
494	Persians crush Ionian rebels at Lade.
492	Persian expedition against Athens and Eretria to punish them for aiding the Ionian rebels is destroyed by a storm in the northern Aegean.
490	Persians besiege and destroy Eretria but are badly defeated by the Athenians at Marathon.
486	Egypt unsuccessfully rebels against Persian rule, distracting Darius from mounting another expedition against Greece. Darius dies and is succeeded by Xerxes.
480	Xerxes leads a massive land and sea assault on Greece. Greeks are defeated at Thermopylae, but the Persian fleet is crushed at Salamis. War erupts between Carthage and Sicilian Greeks. Carthage is badly defeated by Gelon of Syracuse in the Battle of Himera.
479	In a hard-fought battle at Plataea, Greeks rout the large Persian army left behind in Greece.
478–465	Athenian-led Delian League captures remaining Persian outposts in Europe.
465–464	Xerxes murdered and succeeded by Artaxerxes I.
460–453	Egypt rebels against Persia, briefly winning independence.
453	Persians annihilate an Athenian expeditionary force sent to aid Egypt against the Persian counteroffensive.
451	Cimon of Athens captures Cyprus from the Persians.
449	Following Cimon's death, Pericles of Athens makes a truce with Persia.
424–405	Reign of Darius II of Persia.

412	Darius II capitalizes on Athens's disastrous defeat in Sicily to funnel aid to Sparta, beginning a period of active Persian diplomatic intervention in Greek affairs.
409–397	Renewed war between Carthage and Sicilian Greeks.
404	Egypt rebels; remains independent of Persian control for 60 years.
401	Aided by a large force of Greek mercenaries, Cyrus the Younger challenges his brother Artaxerxes II's succession to the throne. He is killed in the Battle of Cunaxa. Greek troops fight their way home across northern Mesopotamia and Anatolia.
395	Sparta turns on Persia; Artaxerxes redirects Persian aid to Athens, rebuilding its navy and walls.
387	To counter Athens's revival, Artaxerxes switches Persian aid back to Sparta.
386	Artaxerxes dictates the King's Peace to the city-states of Greece, ending the Corinthian War.
377–350	Persian authority in Anatolia is shaken by numerous rebellions among satraps and vassal rulers.
374	Persian expedition to reconquer Egypt is defeated.
371	Second King's Peace fails to suppress warfare among Greeks.
358	Egyptians defeat second Persian effort to reconquer Egypt.
355	Persians foment a rebellion that destroys the Second Delian League, gutting Athens's power.
351–343	Artaxerxes III finally reconquers Egypt.
348	Carthage's second trade treaty with Rome.
338–336	Dynastic turmoil in Egypt following the death of Artaxerxes III.
336	Philip II of Macedon establishes a bridgehead in Anatolia.
334	Alexander the Great invades Anatolia, winning the Battle of the Granicus.
333	Alexander defeats Darius III at Issus and conquers Syria and the Levant.
332	Alexander takes Egypt.
331	Alexander invades Mesopotamia, defeating Darius at Arbela.
330	Alexander takes Susa and Persepolis; Darius murdered by Bessus; Alexander takes Persian crown.
289	Mamertine mercenaries seize control of Messana, in northeast Sicily.
264	Both Carthage and Rome answer a Mamertine call for aid against Hiero II of Syracuse; First Punic War begins when they clash over control of Messana.
261	Romans build a fleet to confront Carthage.
260	Roman fleet defeats Carthaginians at Mylae.
260–256	Hamilcar Barca uses Sardinia and Corsica as bases from which to raid Italian coastal towns.
256	In the largest sea battle of antiquity, Romans defeat Carthage at Ecnomus; Romans land an army in Tunisia.

255.....	Spartan mercenary general Xanthippus crushes Roman expeditionary force in North Africa at Bagradas; a Roman fleet sent to rescue the troops in north Africa is destroyed in a storm; 100,000 die.
253.....	Another Roman fleet destroyed in a storm.
252.....	Carthaginian naval squadron defeats Romans at Drepana.
249.....	Third Roman fleet destroyed in a storm.
249–243.....	Hamilcar Barca prosecutes a hit-and-run war against Rome in Sicily from his base at Panormus.
241.....	Roman fleet defeats a Carthaginian squadron at Aegates Islands off Sicily; exhausted, Carthage sues for peace, and Rome wins control of Sicily; birth of the Roman Empire.
241–237.....	The “Truceless War” (mutiny of Carthage’s mercenary troops); native Libyans of North Africa and a number of Phoenician subject communities join the revolt; Carthage savagely puts down the rebellion.
237.....	Capitalizing on Carthage’s weakness, Rome seizes Sardinia and Corsica.
235–221.....	Hamilcar Barca conquers southern and southeastern Spain; he dies in an accident, and his son-in-law Hasdrubal succeeds him; foundation of Nova Carthago (Cartagena).
221.....	Following Hasdrubal’s assassination, the army in Spain chooses Hamilcar’s son Hannibal to succeed him.
220–219.....	Hannibal and Rome dispute control of Saguntum in eastern Spain; the town falls to Hannibal.
218.....	Second Punic War begins; Hannibal leads Carthaginian army overland from Spain to invade Italy, while Roman army marches overland from Italy to invade Spain; Hannibal defeats Scipio, who had aborted his invasion of Spain, at the Ticinus in northern Italy; Hannibal inflicts a crushing defeat on Roman forces at the Trebia.
217.....	Hannibal destroys Roman consular army at Lake Trasimene.
216.....	Hannibal destroys combined armies of both Roman consuls at Cannae.
215.....	At Ibera in Spain, Romans destroy a Carthaginian army; Rome recovers Saguntum.
215–214.....	Carthage fails in a bid to regain Sardinia.
213–210.....	Carthaginian invasion of Sicily is defeated.
211.....	Carthaginians destroy Roman army in Spain at the Battle of the Tader Valley; Hannibal marches on Rome but fails to take the city.
210.....	P. Cornelius Scipio (later Africanus) receives command over the Roman forces in Spain.
209.....	Scipio captures Nova Carthago by a ruse.
208.....	Scipio defeats the Carthaginians at Baecula.
207.....	A Carthaginian army marching from Spain to reinforce Hannibal in Italy is destroyed on the Metaurus.
206.....	Scipio defeats Carthaginians at Ilipa. Remaining Carthaginian troops abandon Spain and march to Italy.
204.....	Scipio invades North Africa.

- 203 Carthaginian troops sent to reinforce Hannibal from Spain are defeated in northern Italy; confronted by Scipio, Carthage makes peace.
- 202 Hannibal returns from Italy and reignites war with Rome; Scipio decisively defeats Hannibal at Zama; Carthage's empire is dissolved in the peace that follows.
- 146 Rome destroys the city of Carthage at the end of the Third Punic War.

Glossary

All dates are before the common era (B.C.).

Achaemenids: The royal dynasty of Persia that began with Darius I (522–486) and continued until the fall of the empire to Alexander of Macedon (Alexander the Great).

Ahhiyava: The name used in Hittite texts for the Mycenaean Greek realms in the Aegean. It is a Hittite transliteration of “Akhaia.”

Akhaia/Akhaians: The name used by Homer for Greece and the Greeks during the Mycenaean period.

Amarna letters: A large cache of tablets discovered at Tel el-Amarna, the former Akhetaten, in Egypt. The letters illuminate diplomatic relations among the great powers of the Near East during the 14th century.

Anitta text: A Hittite document recounting the exploits of Anitta, ancestor of the Hittite kings, during the early 2nd millennium.

Annals of Thutmose III: Texts inscribed on the walls of the Temple at Karnak detailing Thutmose III’s numerous military campaigns.

‘apiru: A generic term meaning “outcast,” applied in the ancient Near East to nomadic groups living on the fringes of settled agricultural areas.

Apology of Hattusilis: A text issued by the Hittite king Hattusilis III (1264–1239) justifying his violation of the Edict of Telepinus by usurping the throne of his brother, Mursilis III.

Aqaiwasha: An element within the marauders known to the Egyptians as the Sea Peoples. It is an Egyptian transliteration of “Akhaia.”

aten: Egyptian officer in command of a company.

baivarabam: In the Persian army, a division of 10,000 men.

bala: A word meaning “exchange” that refers to the food and goods depositories of the highly centralized resource-extraction system of Third-Dynasty Ur (Ur III).

Behistun inscription: A lengthy autobiographical inscription erected by Darius I of Persia.

brother: The term used by rulers of the 2nd millennium to signify another ruler’s equality of status.

corvus: A grapple and boarding ramp, used by the Romans in the First Punic War to negate Carthage’s superior seamanship but eventually abandoned because it made ships dangerously top-heavy.

Council of 104: Also called the Council of Judges, the most important governing body at Carthage, charged with overseeing the generals and the suffetes.

cuneiform: Literally “wedge-shaped,” a form of script employed for incising letters on clay tablets; the standard script used for record keeping in the Near East outside Egypt.

deportation: A widespread practice among Near Eastern empires, employed both to reduce the likelihood of revolt in trouble-prone areas and to populate regions in the interest of improving agricultural productivity.

Djahy: The Egyptian name for the coastal region better known as Phoenicia.

Edict of Telepinus: A decree issued by the Hittite king Telepinus (r. c. 1525–c. 1500), regulating the rules for accession to the throne of Hatti.

enkhos: The thrusting spear wielded by Mycenaean warriors.

ensi: A term that originally meant “king,” it was used by the Akkadian empire to designate royal governors and kept that meaning thereafter.

Etemenanki: Meaning “house of the frontier between heaven and earth,” this was the name of the great ziggurat, or temple platform, built in Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, possibly the inspiration for the story of the Tower of Babel.

Gasga: A tribal people dwelling in the mountains of northern Anatolia who plagued the Hittites throughout their history, often sacking the capital of Hattusas.

gibborim: A term meaning “mighty men,” referring to the Israelite contingent in David’s royal guard.

Grave Circles A and B: The burial grounds of the ruling dynasties of Mycenae in the mid-2nd millennium.

Great Ones: The high aristocracy of Hatti.

gur: An Akkadian unit of dry volume equivalent to about 300 modern liters.

gurush: Literally “lads,” these were male conscript workers in the centralized labor system of Ur III.

Hanigalbat: An alternative name for the kingdom of Mitanni.

Hatti: The name by which the Hittites called their kingdom.

haut: Egyptian officer in command of a division.

hazannu: The title of mayors in the Assyrian empire.

hazarabam: The basic unit of the Persian army, a battalion of 1,000 men.

hoplite: A heavily armed and armored Greek infantryman. His main weapon was a long thrusting spear, or pike.

Hurrians: The people who created the kingdom of Mitanni.

inu: The Egyptian term for levies in kind, typically horses and chariots, applied to the city-states of Canaan.

karum: A large Assyrian merchant colony in Anatolia during the early 2nd millennium.

King’s Peace, the: The treaty imposed by Artaxerxes III on the warring poleis in 386, ending the Corinthian War.

King’s Son of Kush and Overseer of the Southern Lands, the: The title of the viceroy of the provinces of the Egyptian empire beyond the first cataract of the Nile.

King’s Sons, the: The extended family of the Hittite king.

kudurrū: The Kassite Babylonian term for royal deeds conferring land ownership.

Kush: A kingdom located in Nubia, with its heartland between the third and fourth cataracts of the Nile.

Land of Ashur: The portion of the Assyrian empire under direct Assyrian rule, comprising the Assyrian homeland and the provinces of the empire.

Levant: The geographical term for the eastern coastal region of the Mediterranean Sea—currently Syria, Lebanon, and Israel.

Libyphoenicians: The inhabitants of the colonies Carthage established on the coast of northwest Africa.

limmus: The corps of high court officials of the Assyrian empire during the middle and early Neo-Assyrian periods.

Linear A: The undeciphered syllabary script used for record keeping in the palaces of Minoan Crete.

Linear B: A syllabary script derived from Linear A, shown by Michael Ventris in 1953 to represent an archaic form of Greek, used for record keeping in Mycenaean palaces and citadels.

Lower Sea, the: The name by which the Persian Gulf was known in the ancient Near East.

loyalty oaths: Solemn oaths, sworn on the gods of those involved, by which Assyrian subjects promised their fealty to Assyria.

mariyannu: The elite chariot corps of the Mitannian army.

mātum: The Assyrian term meaning “the country,” referring to the Assyrian heartland, the environs of the city of Ashur.

Medize: The Greek term meaning “to submit to Persia.”

menh: Egyptian officer in command of a platoon.

mer: Egyptian officer in command of a battalion.

New Kingdom: The period of Egyptian history between about 1550 and 1069, including Dynasties 18, 19, and 20, during which Egypt conquered, ruled, and then lost an empire in Nubia and the Levant.

ngeme: A “slave girl”; female conscript workers in the centralized labor system of Ur III.

nomes: Units of local administration in Egypt.

Nubia: The region beyond the first cataract of the Nile.

pakhana: A Mycenaean warrior’s sword, which originally had a long, narrow blade but later became shorter and broader.

Palatial period: The term modern scholars use to designate the heyday of Minoan civilization on Crete, between about 2000 and about 1450.

panku: The Hittite assembly of notables, probably consisting of high military commanders and court officials.

penteconter: A light warship propelled in combat by 50 oars.

phalanx: The dense formation in which hoplites fought, typically 8 ranks deep and 100 or more men wide.

polearm: An Egyptian infantry weapon, a combination mace and ax.

polis (pl. poleis): Usually translated as “city-state,” the polis was a self-governing community of citizens. The Greek world comprised hundreds of independent poleis.

Qart-Hadasht: “New Town,” the actual name of Carthage.

quinquireme: A heavy warship propelled in battle by five banks of oars. Used in the Punic Wars.

ras sha muhhi: The majordomo, or chamberlain, of the Assyrian empire.

Retjenu: The Egyptian name for Canaan, the region between the Mediterranean coast and the Jordan River and Dead Sea.

royal ideology: The galaxy of attributes associated with kingship in a particular society.

Royal Road, the: The carefully guarded and supplied road that ran from Sardis to the Persian capital of Susa.

Sacred Band, the: A body of Carthaginian natives 3,000 strong who formed an elite band in the army, often used as an officer training pool.

šangû of Ashur: The “viceroys of Ashur,” the official title of the king of Assyria, signifying his role as deputy of the god Ashur and thus emphasizing that he is not a god himself.

satrap: The governor of a Persian satrapy. Often a member of the extended royal family.

satrapy: One of the roughly two dozen large territorial units into which the Persian empire was divided; these were themselves subdivided into provinces.

Sea Peoples: The Egyptian name for several diverse waves of migrants and brigands who marauded their way through the eastern Mediterranean during the late 13th and early 12th centuries, destroying numerous towns and cities as well as the Egyptian empire in the Levant.

Sealand, the: The name by which Lower Mesopotamia was known in the mid-2nd millennium.

seal-houses: The local and regional warehouses where Hittite revenues, collected in kind, were stored.

shagina: An Akkadian term meaning “military governor.”

Sharru-kin: The actual form of the name we render as Sargon, meaning “the king is legitimate.” Its use implies that the person bearing the name has a questionable claim to his throne.

Shasu: The name Egyptian records give to nomadic groups living beyond the frontier of the Egyptian empire, south of the Dead Sea, who preyed on caravans. Egyptian texts locate Israel among the Shasu.

suffetes: The Latinized form of the Semitic word *šp̄tm*, usually rendered in English as “judges.”

sukkulmah: The viceroy who presided over the frontier regions of the Ur III empire.

Sumerian king list: A document probably of the 19th century that lists rulers of Mesopotamia and Sumeria from the mythic past down to the time the list was compiled. It artificially assigns overall kingship of Mesopotamia to one city at a time.

tamkar: Ur III official charged with overseeing trade and commerce.

Ten Thousand Immortals, the: The elite royal guard of the Persian army, called the Immortals because whenever one of them died or retired, a replacement was immediately appointed.

thalassocracy: Literally, “mastery of the sea,” or a sea empire. The legendary Minos of Crete was credited by later Greek authors with having created the first thalassocracy.

Thirty, the: The royal guard of David’s army.

tholos (pl. tholoi): A large, beehive- or igloo-shaped masonry structure used as a dynastic tomb in Mycenaean Greece.

trireme: A heavy warship propelled in combat by numerous oars arranged in three banked tiers.

tuhkanti: The title of the Hittite crown prince.

turtanu: The chief army commander of Assyria.

tyrant: A ruler of a Greek polis who either seized power or was placed in power in defiance of the laws of that city.

ummanu: The chancellor of the Assyrian empire.

United Monarchy: The union of the clans of Israel and Judah under a single monarch, between the anointment of Saul (c. 1025) and the death of Solomon (c. 920).

vassal treaties: Texts defining relations between subordinate rulers and the Great King of Hatti, usually inscribed on metal plaques.

wabartum: A small Assyrian trading post in Anatolia in the early 2nd millennium.

wanax: The word meaning “king” in Mycenaean Greek.

Yoke of Ashur: The vassal states of the Assyrian empire.

Biographical Notes

All dates are before the common era (B.C.).

Adad-Nirari I (r. 1305–1274): Assyrian ruler who annexed the rump of Mitanni, extended Assyrian power into northern Syria, and pushed the Kassites out of northern Babylonia.

Adad-Nirari II (r. 912–890): Second king of the New Assyrian period, who began the practice of regular campaigning to extort tribute from peoples on Assyria's borders.

Adad-Nirari III (810–783): Neo-Assyrian king who humbled the principality of Damascus and the kingdom of Israel.

Adad-shum-usur (r. 1218–1189): Kassite ruler under whom the Kassite kingdom enjoyed a brief resurgence.

Adasi (fl. 16th century): Progenitor of the kings of Assyria.

Agum II (r. c. 1570): First Kassite ruler of Babylon, following the city's sack by the Hittites and the end of the First Dynasty.

Ahmose (r. 1550–1525): Founder of Dynasty 18, New Kingdom Egypt, and the Egyptian empire, he drove the Hyksos back into Palestine and began to establish Egyptian control over the southern Levant.

Akhenaten (a.k.a. **Amenhotep IV**; r. 1352–1336): Religious visionary and Dynasty 18 pharaoh under whom the Amarna letters (diplomatic correspondence with Egyptian vassals and with other Near Eastern monarchs) were compiled.

Alexander III of Macedon (a.k.a. **Alexander the Great**; r. 336–323): The most dazzling military genius in history. After coming to the throne of his small country at the age of 20, Alexander invaded and conquered the Persian empire in a three-year campaign.

Amenhotep I (r. 1525–1504): Son of Ahmose, this Dynasty 18 pharaoh expanded the Egyptian frontier far up the Nile Valley into Nubia.

Amenhotep II (r. 1427–1400): Dynasty 18 pharaoh who fought the Mitanni to a standstill in northern Syria.

Ammuna (r. c. 1550–1530): Son of the Hittite king Zidanta. He murdered his father and seized the throne for himself.

Anitta (r. c. 1750): Lord of Kussara in central Anatolia, claimed by Hittite kings as their predecessor.

Ariamnes (r. c. 650): Claimed by Darius I as his ancestor, he was progenitor of the Achaemenid dynasty that ruled Persia from Darius on.

Arik-den-ili (r. 1317–1306): Assyrian ruler who fended off attacks from the hill people of the eastern Taurus and took the title "mighty king, king of Assyria."

Aristagoras (r. c. 500): Tyrant of the city of Miletus, whose intrigues sparked the Ionian revolt and the great wars between Persia and the Greeks.

Artadama I (r. c. 1390): Mitannian king who concluded a treaty with Egypt, resolving their disputes over northern Syria.

Artadama II (r. c. 1350): Hittite-sponsored pretender to the throne of Mitanni.

Artaxerxes I (r. 464–424): Persian king who crushed Athenian efforts in 453 to aid Egyptian rebels and who concluded a *modus vivendi* with Athens in 449.

Artaxerxes II (r. 405–359): Although the longest-reigning Persian king, he lost control of Egypt and struggled to maintain control of Asia Minor and the Levant, but he held the Greeks at bay through skillful diplomacy.

Artaxerxes III (r. 358–338): Persian king who, though cruel and tyrannical, managed to reconquer Egypt and briefly restore the fortunes of the Persian empire.

Ashurbanipal (r. 668–c. 630): The last great ruler of Assyria, he completed the conquest of Egypt but soon lost it. Lydia in western Anatolia submitted to him, and he destroyed the kingdom of Elam in southwestern Iran after it aided a Babylonian rebellion against Assyria.

Ashur-Dan II (r. 934–912): Creator of the New Assyrian kingdom, from which the empire developed, he secured Assyria's frontiers and reformed the army.

Ashurnasirpal II (r. 883–859): Assyrian king and active campaigner who asserted Assyria's power as far east as the Zagros, as far west as Anatolia, and as far south as the Levant.

Ashur-uballit I (r. 1363–1328): Founder of the Middle Kingdom of Assyria, he annexed the region around Nineveh and made Kassite Babylonia into an Assyrian vassal.

Ashur-uballit II (r. 611–c. 608): Fugitive Assyrian prince who took refuge in Harran after the fall of the Assyrian empire and, with Egyptian backing, held out for about two more years before being defeated and disappearing from history.

Astyages (r. c. 585–550): Son and successor of Cyaxares as king of the Medes, he lost his kingdom when his army mutinied rather than face Cyrus of Persia.

Atarissiya (r. c. 1400): Ruler of a Mycenaean Greek principality located in the islands of the Aegean and mentioned in Hittite documents as a cause of insecurity in western Anatolia.

Bagoas (d. 336): Persian royal eunuch who engineered the murder of Artaxerxes III but was himself executed by Darius III.

Bardiya (a.k.a. **Smerdis**; d. 522): Brother of Cambyses II, Herodotus narrates the story of the intrigues that surrounded his death.

Belshazzar (a.k.a. **Bel-shar-usur**; fl. c. 540): Son of the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus and viceroy of Babylonia during his father's 10-year absence in Arabia (553–543).

Bessus (d. 330): Persian nobleman who assassinated Darius III, the last king of Persia. Alexander had Bessus tried under Persian law by a court of Persian aristocrats, and after they condemned him, Alexander had Bessus executed.

Cambyses I (r. c. 585–559): King of Persis/Anshan and father of Cyrus II.

Cambyses II (r. 530–522): Son and successor of Cyrus II, he conquered and annexed Egypt and Cyrene to the Persian empire but died in a riding accident.

Cimon (c. 520–451): Athenian commander, son of Miltiades, who masterminded the Athenian-led counteroffensive against Persia in the eastern Mediterranean after 479.

Croesus (r. c. 560–546): The last king of Lydia, whose kingdom fell to Cyrus II.

Cyaxares (r. c. 625–585): Chieftain who united the Medes and aided Nabopolassar of Babylonia in destroying the Assyrian empire.

Cyrus I (r. c. 620–585): King of Persis/Anshan, son of Teispes, father of Cambyses I, and grandfather of Cyrus II.

Cyrus II (a.k.a. **Cyrus the Great**; r. 559–530): King of Persis/Anshan who defeated the Medes, the Lydians, and the Babylonians to create the Persian empire, the largest empire the world had known to that date.

Cyrus the Younger (d. 401): Youngest son of Darius II, he challenged his brother, Artaxerxes II, for the throne, using an army of Peloponnesian War veterans whom he had recruited thanks to his role as viceroy of Anatolia. Although he won the Battle of Cunaxa, he was killed in the fight.

Darius I (r. 522–486): Founder of the Achaemenid line of Persian kings, he completed the expansion of the Persian empire and gave the empire its distinctive administrative structure.

Darius II (r. 424–405): Persian king who capitalized on Athens's weakness after its defeat in Sicily to funnel aid to Athens's enemy, Sparta, and thus to gain diplomatic leverage for Persia in internal Greek politics.

Darius III (r. 336–331): As king of Persia, he was a capable ruler and sound strategist but had the misfortune of having to face Alexander the Great. Alexander defeated him twice in battle but gave him a royal funeral after he was assassinated by the nobleman Bessus.

David (r. c. 1000–960): Bandit chieftain from the southern clans of Judah who was anointed king of Israel after Saul's death. He extended his power east of the Jordan River and north beyond Damascus.

Elissa (a.k.a. **Dido**; r. c. 800): Legendary founder of Carthage, a princess of Tyre driven into exile by King Pygmalion, who murdered his brother, her husband.

Enheduanna (fl. c. 2300): Daughter of Sargon of Akkad, installed by her father as priestess of the moon god Nanna at Ur, inaugurating a tradition among subsequent Mesopotamian rulers. She is the first known female author in human history.

Enlil-nirari (r. 1327–1318): Assyrian ruler who defeated a Kassite counterattack on Assyria after the Kassites threw off Assyrian overlordship.

Enmebaragesi (r. c. 2700): Ruler (*ensi*) of Kish. The first arguably historical ruler in the Sumerian king list.

Esarhaddon (r. 680–669): Like most Assyrian kings, he had to suppress multiple rebellions, but he was able to begin the conquest of Egypt toward the end of his reign.

Gaumata (a.k.a. **pseudo-Smerdis**; r. c. 522–521): In Herodotus's account of the intrigues surrounding Bardiya/Smerdis's death, a Persian priest, or *magus*, who posed as the dead prince.

Gelon (r. c. 491–477): Becoming tyrant of Gela on Sicily around 491, he seized control of Syracuse and made himself tyrant there. He defeated the Carthaginians at Himera in 480, making him the virtual ruler of Greek Sicily.

Gilgamesh (r. c. 2650): Ruler (*ensi*) of Uruk, who left behind such a powerful memory that he was reckoned semidivine and became the central figure of the Sumerian national epic.

Hamilcar Barca (d. 229): Carthaginian commander who waged a successful campaign of naval and land raids against Italy and Sicily during the latter stages of the First Punic War, then went on to mastermind the expansion of the Carthaginian empire in Spain.

Hamilcar Mago (fl. c. 480): Carthaginian commander defeated by Gelon of Syracuse at the Battle on Himera in 480.

Hammurabi (r. 1792–1750): Founder of the First Dynasty of Babylon and the short-lived Old Babylonian Empire. After the death of Shamshi-Adad, he rapidly conquered an empire that included all of Mesopotamia. Under him, Babylon became the greatest city of Mesopotamia.

Hannibal Barca (247–182): Brilliant Carthaginian commander, the son of Hamilcar Barca, he launched a daring overland invasion of Italy that came close to destroying Rome's power, but he failed and was defeated at Zama, after which he went into exile.

Hantilis (r. c. 1590–c. 1560): Brother-in-law to Mursilis I. He murdered Mursilis and usurped the throne of Hatti, inaugurating a period of chaos and decline.

Harpagus (fl. c. 585): In Herodotus's account, the servant of Astyages who was responsible for sparing the life of the infant Cyrus II and who later encouraged Cyrus to rebel against Astyages.

Hasdrubal Barca (d. 207): Younger brother of Hannibal, left in command of Carthaginian forces in Spain when Hannibal marched on Italy. Hasdrubal was successful at holding Spain against Roman attacks until the advent of Scipio Africanus, who forced Hasdrubal to evacuate Spain. Marching to Italy, he was defeated and killed at the Battle of the Metaurus.

Hattusilis I (r. c. 1650–1620): Heir to the throne of Kussara and founder of the Hittite Old Kingdom. He moved his capital to Hattusas and conquered much of Anatolia.

Hattusilis III (r. c. 1264–c. 1240): Hittite king who came to the throne after a debilitating civil war. Under him, Hittite power began to wane.

Herodotus (c. 480–c. 420): Founder of the discipline of history and historian of the Greco-Persian Wars of 499–479.

Hieron II (r. c. 271–216): Tyrant, later king, of Syracuse, leading that city through the First Punic War and into the early years of the Second Punic War.

Horemheb (r. 1232–1295): The last pharaoh of Dynasty 18, under whom defeat by the Hittites and rebellions temporarily cost Egypt much of its empire in the Levant.

Huzziya (r. c. 1530–c. 1525): Hittite king who came to the throne after a palace conspiracy murdered his predecessor, Ammuna. He and his family fell victim to another palace massacre.

Ibbi-Sin (r. 2028–2004): The fourth and last ruler of Third-Dynasty Ur (Ur III). External pressures collapsed the centralized Ur III system, and Ur fell to the Elamites.

Ishbi-Erra (r. 2017–1985): A rebel official of Ur III who founded the First Dynasty of Isin when Ur III collapsed.

Kamose (r. 1555–1550): Ruler of Upper Egypt and last pharaoh of Dynasty 17, his bold attack on the Hyksos capital at Avaris began the reconquest of lower Egypt.

Kandalanu (r. c. 647–627): Last and shadowy Assyrian ruler of Babylonia. Kandalanu is perhaps a throne name for Ashurbanipal, but he may be a separate figure.

Kashtiliashu IV (r. 1232–1225): Kassite ruler who was defeated and taken prisoner by the Assyrian Tikulti-Ninurta I, after which the Assyrians appointed puppet rulers in Babylon.

Kurigalzu I (r. c. 1400): Kassite ruler who temporarily moved the capital from Babylon to a new site, the fortress of Dur-Kurigalzu, which he had built.

Lugalzagesi (r. c. 2350–2316): Tyrannical king of Uruk, overthrown and humbled by Sargon of Akkad.

Madduwatta (fl. c. 1410): Fractious southwest Anatolian vassal of the Hittite king Tudhaliyas II. Their relations, documented in “The Indictment of Madduwatta,” cast great light on how Hittite kings managed vassal relations.

Mago (r. c. 550): Leader who was chiefly responsible for launching Carthage’s ascent to imperial power and greatness. Patriarch of the Magonid clan that led Carthage well into the 5th century.

Mago Barca (d. 203): Youngest brother of Hannibal and the last Carthaginian commander in Spain. He was forced to evacuate Spain, and after failing to take the Balearic Islands, he landed in Italy, where he was defeated and mortally wounded in 203.

Malchus (r. c. 550): Carthaginian general under whom Carthage became involved in Sardinia. He returned to Carthage and briefly made himself tyrant.

Mandane (fl. c. 585): According to Herodotus, the daughter of Astyages the Mede and mother of Cyrus II.

Manishtushu (r. 2269–2255): Second son of Sargon of Akkad. Like his older brother, Rimush, he fought to preserve rather than expand his father’s realm.

Mardonius (c. 530–479): Achaemenid noble who commanded a failed Persian expedition against Greece in 492 and was killed fighting at Plataea in 479.

Merneptah (r. 1213–1203): Dynasty 19 pharaoh who had to battle rebellions in Nubia and the Levant as well as increasing pressure from marauding Sea Peoples.

Miltiades (c. 560–489): Athenian commander who defeated a Persian punitive attack on Athens at Marathon in 490.

Minos (r. c. 2nd millennium): According to classical Greek legend, the ruler of Crete. His ethnicity (Greek or Minoan) is unclear. Alternatively, “minos” may be the Minoan word for “king.”

Mursilis I (r. c. 1620–1590): Hittite king who sacked Babylon and destroyed the last vestiges of Hammurabi’s empire.

Mursilis II (r. c. 1330–c. 1290): Hittite king who expanded Hittite power into western Anatolia, conquering Arzawa and defeating Ahhiyawa.

Mursilis III (r. c. 1271–c. 1264): *See Urhi-Teshub.*

Muwatallis II (r. c. 1290–c. 1271): King who expanded Hittite power into southern Syria and defeated an Egyptian offensive in the Battle of Kadesh (1274).

Nabonidus (r. 555–539): Last king of the Neo-Babylonian empire, he spent much of his reign in a mysterious self-imposed exile at the oasis of Teima in northern Arabia but returned to Mesopotamia to be defeated by Cyrus II of Persia.

Nabopolassar (r. 626–605): Founder of the Neo-Babylonian empire, he came to the throne of Babylonia under mysterious circumstances and, over the course of the following 15 years, destroyed the Assyrian empire.

Naram-Sin (r. 2255–2218): Grandson of Sargon of Akkad, he expanded the Akkadian empire down the Persian Gulf into southwestern Iran and declared himself a god.

Nebuchadrezzar II (a.k.a. **Nebuchadnezzar**; r. 604–562): Second king of the Neo-Babylonian empire, he was frustrated in his efforts to conquer Egypt but succeeded in subjugating Tyre after a long siege. He destroyed the kingdom of Judah and the Temple after multiple rebellions.

Pitkhana (r. c. 1800): Lord of Kussara in central Anatolia. Claimed by the Hittite kings as their predecessor.

pseudo-Smerdis: *See Gaumata.*

Pygmalion (r. c. 800): King of Tyre whose intrigues, according to legend, drove his sister-in-law Elissa (Dido) to flee Tyre and to found Carthage.

Ramesses II (r. 1279–1213): The famous Dynasty 19 pharaoh who defeated the Hittite king Muwatallis at Kadesh (1274) but lost control of central Syria in the wake of the victory. Afterward, he concluded the first formal peace treaty in history with Hatti.

Ramesses III (r. 1184–1153): Dynasty 20 pharaoh who faced and defeated two concerted assaults on Egypt by the Libyans and the Sea Peoples.

Ramesses VI (r. 1143–1136): Dynasty 20 pharaoh under whom Egypt permanently lost control over Palestine, bringing an end to its empire in the Levant.

Rim-Sin I (r. 1822–1763): Ruler of Larsa, he defeated Isin and established a regional kingdom in southern Mesopotamia that finally fell to Hammurabi.

Rimush (r. 2278–2270): Eldest son of Sargon of Akkad, he struggled to maintain his father's realm.

Sargon of Akkad (r. c. 2334–2278): Beginning his career as cupbearer to Ur-Zababa of Kish, he went on to conquer Mesopotamia and northern Syria and to create the first empire in human history.

Sargon II (r. 721–705): Assyrian king who deported 27,290 people from Israel, conquered southeastern Anatolia, and crushed rebellions in Babylonia but was killed in battle with the Cimmerians.

Saul (r. c. 1025–1000): The first king of Israel, anointed when the clans united to defend themselves against Philistine pressure.

Sausattar (r. mid-15th century B.C.): King of Mitanni who conquered Ashur and advanced Mitannian power into eastern Anatolia.

Scipio Africanus (a.k.a. **P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus**; 236–183): Given extraordinary command of the Roman forces battling Carthage in Spain, he destroyed the Carthaginian empire there and then invaded North Africa, defeating Hannibal at Zama and winning the Second Punic War.

Sennacherib (r. 704–681): Assyrian king who crushed rebellions in Babylonia and campaigned into southern Anatolia but was assassinated by his own sons.

Sety I (r. 1294–1279): Dynasty 19 pharaoh who aggressively reasserted Egyptian power in the Levant, winning back what had been lost under Horemheb.

Shalmaneser III (r. 858–824): Plagued by revolts, he spent much of his very active military career defending and consolidating the conquests of his father, Ashurnasirpal II.

Shalmaneser V (r. 727–722): Assyrian conqueror of the northern kingdom of Israel, the capital of which (Samaria) fell after a three-year siege.

Shamshi-Adad (r. c. 1808–1776): Conqueror of northern Mesopotamia and Syria, creator of the short-lived kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia.

Shattiwaza (r. c. 1340): Mitanni prince installed by the Hittites as their vassal in a rump Mitanni state in western Anatolia, marking the end of the kingdom of Mitanni.

Shulgi (r. 2094–2047): The son and successor of Ur-Nammu. He built on his father's foundation and made Ur III into a tightly centralized state.

Shur-Sin (r. 2037–2029): Ur III dynast.

Shutruk-Nahhunte (r. c. 1165): Elamite king who conquered Babylonia and destroyed the last vestiges of the Kassite kingdom.

Shuttarna II (r. c. 1370): King of Mitanni. His murder led to a period of bloody civil war.

Sin-shar-ishkun (r. 623–612): Last king of Assyria, he fought hard to contain the rising power of Nabopolassar in Babylonia but was defeated and finally saw Nabopolassar destroy Ashur, Nineveh, and the Assyrian empire.

Smerdis: *See Bardiya.*

Solomon (r. c. 960–920): Last king of the United Monarchy of Israel, he built the first Temple, but his harsh treatment of the northern clans alienated them and led to the dissolution of the United Monarchy immediately following his death.

Suppiluliumas I (r. c. 1370–c. 1326): The real founder of the Hittite empire. He destroyed Mitanni and subjugated northern Syria.

Suppiluliumas II (r. after 1210): The last king of Hatti. Under him, the Hittite kingdom collapsed and vanished. His fate is unknown.

Tawagalawas (r. c. 1250): Mycenaean ruler of an island principality in the Aegean who sheltered Hittite renegades and launched raids on western Anatolia.

Teispes (r. c. 650–620): Founder of the royal line of Persis/Anshan and ancestor of Cyrus II.

Telepinus (r. c. 1525–c. 1500): Ruler who restored stability to the Hittite kingdom after 75 years of chaos and regularized the rules of succession to the throne in the Edict of Telepinus.

Themistocles (c. 524–459): Athenian leader who persuaded Athens in 483 to build a large fleet. He led Athens in resisting Persia in 480/79 but took refuge at the Persian court late in life and became Persian governor of the city of Magnesia.

Thutmose I (r. 1504–1492): Dynasty 18 pharaoh who advanced the frontiers of Egypt's empire to the fourth cataract of the Nile and into southern Syria, marching his army as far as the Euphrates.

Thutmose III (r. 1479–1425): The greatest conqueror in Egyptian history, he won the Battle of Megiddo (Armageddon), waged 17 campaigns in the Levant, advanced Egypt's frontier into central Syria, and crossed the Euphrates into eastern Syria. Early in his reign, Thutmose's stepmother, Queen Hatshepsut, was his regent; he was established as sole ruler in 1458.

Thutmose IV (r. 1400–1390): Dynasty 18 pharaoh who achieved peace on Egypt's frontier in the Levant by concluding a treaty with Mitanni fixing their boundary in central Syria.

Tiglath-pileser I (r. 1114–1076): Stabilized Assyria after a period of dynastic instability, driving the Babylonians out of Assyria and then campaigning as far as Phoenicia.

Tiglath-pileser III (r. 744–727): Inaugurated the golden age of Assyrian imperial power by conquering Syria, defeating Urartu, and placing Babylonia under direct Assyrian rule.

Tikulti-Ninurta I (r. 1243–1207): Capitalized on the collapse of the Hittite empire to push into Anatolia, then crushed the remainder of the Kassite kingdom.

Tudhaliyas II (r. c. 1430–c. 1410): Founder of the Hittite New Kingdom who inaugurated an era of renewed Hittite expansion. (Tudhaliyas I may have been an obscure Old Kingdom Hittite ruler).

Tudhaliyas III (r. c. 1380–c. 1370): Hittite king under whom the kingdom nearly collapsed under simultaneous assault from all sides.

Tudhaliyas IV (r. c. 1240–c. 1210): Weakened by concessions to powerful Hittite barons, Tudhaliyas was unable to halt the disintegration of Hittite royal power.

Tushratta (r. c. 1350): King of Mitanni who overthrew his predecessor in a bloody coup.

Ulam-Buriash (r. c. 1475): Kassite ruler who defeated the King of the Sealand and established Kassite control over southern Mesopotamia, as well as points along the coast of the lower Persian Gulf.

Urhi-Teshub (a.k.a. **Mursilis III**; r. c. 1271–c. 1264): Hittite king, nephew of Muwatallis II; he ascended the throne as Mursilis III but was overthrown by his uncle (who became Hattusilis III) and fled to Egypt.

Ur-Nammu (r. 2112–2095): Founder of Ur III, he conquered an empire that stretched from Nineveh to the Persian Gulf.

Utuhegal (r. 2119–2112): Ruler of Uruk who defeated the Gutians and expelled them from Mesopotamia.

Xanthippus (r. c. 255): Spartan mercenary commander who led the Carthaginians to a crushing victory over a Roman invasion force in 255 at the Battle of Bagradas.

Xerxes (r. 486–465): Son and successor to Darius I, he led the greatest military expedition of antiquity, the Persian invasion of Greece in 480, but despite a victory at Thermopylae, he was badly defeated at Salamis.

Zidanta (r. c. 1560–c. 1550): Hittite usurper who seized the throne after murdering Hantilis's family.

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Wood, M. *In Search of the Trojan War*. London: Facts on File, 1985. Companion to a television series; sometimes credulous, but a useful overview of the closing era of Mycenaean Greece for the nonspecialist in a field too dominated by highly technical volumes.

Carthage

Bagnall, N. *The Punic Wars*. New York: St. Martin's, 1990. A very good account of the Punic wars, with a useful introductory chapter on the history and government of Carthage.

Caven, B. *The Punic Wars*. New York: St. Martin's, 1980. A study aimed at the general reader and focused exclusively on the wars themselves, not on the political and social organization of Carthage or Rome.

Goldsworthy, A. *The Fall of Carthage: The Punic Wars 265–146 B.C.* New York: Phoenix, 2000. First issued under the title *The Punic Wars* (2000), a detailed but approachable investigation of the Punic Wars by one of the leading scholars of the Roman army.

Lancel, S. *Carthage: A History*. Translated by A. Nevill. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1995. Very archeological in its focus, this is an often rambling effort at a narrative of Phoenician expansion and Carthaginian history.

Picard, G. *Carthage*. Translated by M. and L. Kochan. New York: Ungar, 1965. A beginner's survey of Carthaginian history, well illustrated with black-and-white photographs.

———. *Daily Life in Carthage*. Translated by A. E. Foster. New York: MacMillan, 1961. A good, though somewhat dated, topical survey of Carthaginian life and institutions, which benefits from not being diluted by discussion of Carthage's wars.

Picard, G. C., and C. Picard. *The Life and Death of Carthage*. Translated by D. Collon. New York: Taplinger, 1968. Focused on Carthage rather than on the Punic Wars, this volume is important for its attention to Carthaginian government and imperial expansion.

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The Egyptian Empire

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Grimal, N. *A History of Ancient Egypt*. Translated by I. Shaw. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992. A learned study of Egyptian history down to Alexander, with an immense bibliography.

Moran, W. L., ed. and trans. *The Amarna Letters*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. A complete collection of the cuneiform correspondence recovered from Tell el-Amarna, the capital of the pharaoh Akhenaten.

Schulman, A. R. *Military Rank, Title, and Organization in the Egyptian New Kingdom*. Berlin: Hessling, 1964. A scholarly investigation of the officer elite of imperial Egypt and the structure of the Egyptian army.

Shaw, I., ed. *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*. New York: Oxford, 2000. A single-volume survey of Egyptian history down to the Roman conquest, but lacking in detail because of the scope of its coverage.

Spalinger, A. J. *War in Ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005. Basically a textbook on the rise and fall of the Egyptian empire, seen through a military lens.

Steindorff, G., and K. C. Seele. *When Egypt Ruled the East*. Rev. ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957. An old but still valuable survey that focuses on New Kingdom Egypt and its empire.

Israel

Bright, J. A. *A History of Israel*. 4th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 2001. A detailed narrative from the patriarchal period to the Maccabees.

Finkelstein, I., and N. A. Silberman. *David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible's Sacred Kings and the Roots of the Western Tradition*. New York: Free Press, 2006. A very valuable archeologically based reassessment of what we can, and cannot, know about the period of the United Monarchy in Israel.

Gottwald, N. K. *The Politics of Ancient Israel*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001. A revisionist study of the political history of the Israelite kingdoms, characterized by a text-critical approach to Biblical sources.

Grant, M. *The History of Ancient Israel*. New York: Scribner, 1984. A solid and substantial analysis of the history of Canaan and its peoples from the early 2nd millennium to the Great Jewish Revolt in A.D. 66–70.

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The Hellenistic and Roman Near East

Bowman, A. K. *Egypt After the Pharaohs: 332 BC–AD 642*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986. A well-illustrated and accessible overview of how Egyptian culture adapted to Greco-Roman rule and Greco-Roman culture.

Green, P. *Alexander to Actium: The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. A thorough scholarly treatment of Hellenistic history and civilization, from one of the greatest names in the scholarship of the period.

Millar, F. *The Roman Near East 31 BC–AD 337*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993. The best single-volume study of Roman rule in the Near East down to the dawn of the Byzantine period.

Miscellaneous Topics

Cotterell, A. *Chariot: The Astounding Rise and Fall of the World's First War Machine*. New York: Pimlico, 2005. A survey of the emergence, technology, and use of chariots not only in the Near East but also in the Mediterranean, India, and China, this volume contains much useful information but suffers from a rambling and undisciplined approach that requires the reader to dig for the nuggets it contains.

Hamblin, W. J. *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 B.C.: Holy Warriors at the Dawn of History*. New York: Routledge, 2006. An extremely valuable study of military history, techniques, and organization.